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Barrow, Isaac, 1630-1677.
The works of Isaac Barrow

THE

WORKS

OF

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
BY
ABRAHAM HILL,

AND

A MEMOIR,
BY
JAMES HAMILTON,

WITH THE

NOTES AND REFERENCES CAREFULLY REVISED;

AND

INDEXES COMPILED EXPRESSLY FOR THIS EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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BARROW'S WORKS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

THE English theological works of Barrow were first published by Dr. Tillotson, who was then Dean of Canterbury, in three volumes folio, in 1685. That edition was reprinted more than once, and for the last time in 1741.

A fourth volume, containing the Latin works, was added in 1687: which was not reprinted with the others. The English works were printed at the Clarendon Press in 1818, in six volumes 8vo. The present edition is a reprint of that last; with the addition of the Latin works, as published in 1687. These consist of theological treatises, academical exercises, and poems. This new edition contains all the works of Barrow, which are known to exist in English or Latin, except his mathematical compositions.

The Latin treatises and poems were printed in the folio edition, without any systematical arrangement; they are now placed in chronological order, so far as their dates could be ascertained.

Some Notes have been added to the short Life of Barrow by Abraham Hill, which are taken from Pope's Life of Ward, bishop of Salisbury, Ward's Lives of the "Professors of Gresham College," and the Biographia Britannica.

The preceding paragraphs combine the Narrative prefixed to the standard edition of "The Theological Works of Isaac Barrow," published in eight octavo volumes by the University of Oxford, in 1830. But another edition of Barrow's Works subsequently was issued at Edinburgh, in 1842, with a Life of the Author, by the Rev. James Hamilton.

For this American copy, both those editions, that of Oxford and that of Edinburgh, have been carefully collated. As it was decided to leave Mr. Hill's Biographical Narrative entire; the more recent Memoir of Mr. Hamilton was compared with it; and to avoid superfluous repetitions, the passages which Mr. Hamilton had literally extracted from Mr. Hill's account have been expunged; otherwise Mr. Hamilton's sketch is appended complete; thus adding largely to the portraiture which Mr. Hill had given of the renowned author.

The Indexes which are subjoined, have been compiled expressly for this edition; which is more perfect than either of the European copies—as it includes all the matter of both, besides the Indexes, which to every Reader, and especially to Students, and Literary Men, for facility of reference and use, highly enhance the value of the works by this profound and erudite Theologian.

New York,
January 11, 1845.

BARROW'S WORKS.

CONTENTS

OF

VOL. I.

PAGE

ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF DR. ISAAC BARROW, BY ABRAHAM HILL, xi

MEMOIR OF DR. BARROW, BY JAMES HAMILTON, ... xxv

SERMONS.

I. THE PLEASANTNESS OF RELIGION.

Proverbs iii. 17.—"*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*" 1

II. III. THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 Timothy iv. 8.—"*Godliness is profitable for all things.*" . 9; 20

IV. THE REWARD OF HONOURING GOD.

1 Samuel ii. 30.—"*Them that honour me I will honour.*" . . 31

V. UPRIGHT WALKING SURE WALKING.

Proverbs x. 9.—"*He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.*" . . 44

VI. VII. THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

1 Thessalonians v. 17.—"*Pray without ceasing.*" . . . 53; 60

VIII. IX. THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

Ephesians v. 20.—"*Giving thanks always unto God.*" . . 69; 80

PAGE

X. THE KING'S HAPPY RETURN.

1 Timothy ii. 1, 2.—"*I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all who are in authority.*" . . . 93

XI. THE GUNPOWDER TREASON.

Psalm lxiv. 9, 10.—"*All men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall surely consider of his doing. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*" 108

XII. CONSECRATION SERMON.

Psalm cxxxii. 16.—"*I will also clothe her priests with salvation.*" . 124

XIII. NOT TO OFFEND IN WORD, AN EVIDENCE OF HIGH VIRTUE.

James iii. 2.—"*If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man.*" 140

XIV. FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING.

Ephesians v. 4.—"*Nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.*" 149

XV. RASH AND VAIN SWEARING.

James v. 12.—"*Above all things, my brethren, Swear not.*" . . 162

XVI. EVIL SPEAKING.

Titus iii. 2.—"*Speak evil of no man.*" 174

XVII. XVIII. FOLLY OF SLANDER.

Proverbs x. 18.—"*He who uttereth Slander is a fool.*" . 186; 196

XIX. DETRACTION.

James iv. 11.—"*Speak not evil, one of another, brethren.*" . . 203

XX. RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.

Matthew vii. 1.—"*Judge not.*" 210

XXI. XXII. QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 Thessalonians iv. 11.—"*Study to be quiet, and to do your own business.*" 223; 231

XXIII. XXIV. LOVE OF GOD.

Matthew xxii. 37.—"*Jesus said to him; Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.*" 238; 248

PAGE.

XXV. XXVI. LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

Matthew xxii. 39.—"*The second is like to it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" 256; 267

XXVII. CHARITY.

Ephesians v. 2.—"*Walk in love.*" 273

XXVIII. MOTIVES TO CHARITY.

Hebrews x. 24.—"*Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works.*" 286

XXIX. XXX. A PEACEABLE TEMPER.

Romans xii. 18.—"*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*" 297; 309

XXXI. BOUNTY TO THE POOR.

Psalm cxii. 9.—"*He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever, his horn shall be exalted with honour.*" 321

XXXII. PASSION OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

Philippians ii. 8.—"*Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.*" 357

XXXIII. DOING ALL IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

Colossians iii. 17.—"*Whatsoever ye do, in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*" 377

XXXIV. IMITATORS OF CHRIST.

1 Corinthians iv. 16.—"*I beseech you, be followers of me*"—*or*—*I exhort you, be imitators of me.* 388

XXXV. WALKING AS CHRIST WALKED.

1 John ii. 6.—"*He who saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk as he walked.*" 398

XXXVI. SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

Luke xxii. 42.—"*Not my will, but thine be done.*" 406

XXXVII. XXXVIII. XXXIX. XL. XLI. CONTENTMENT.

Philippians iv. 11.—"*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*" 414; 424; 430; 439; 452

XLII. PATIENCE.

1 Peter ii. 21.—"*Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.*" 461

PAGE.

XLIII. REJOICING.

1 Thessalonians v. 16.—"*Rejoice evermore.*" 472

XLIV. XLV. KEEPING THE HEART.

Proverbs iv. 23.—"*Keep thy heart with all diligence.*". . 480; 486

XLVI. XLVII. CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

Psalm xc. 12.—"*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.*" 496; 507

XLVIII. XLIX. DELAY OF REPENTANCE.

Psalm cxii. 60.—"*I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*" 518; 527

L. LI. INDUSTRY.

Ecclesiastes ix. 10.—"*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.*" 534; 544

LII. INDUSTRY AS CHRISTIANS.

Romans xii. 11.—"*Not slothful in business.*" 553

LIII. INDUSTRY AS GENTLEMEN.

Romans xii. 11.—"*Not slothful in business.*" 562

LIV. INDUSTRY AS SCHOLARS.

Romans xii. 11.—"*Not slothful in business.*" 567

LV. UNSEARCHABLENESS OF GOD'S JUDGEMENTS.

Romans xi. 33.—"*How unsearchable are his Judgements, and his ways past finding out!*" 575

LVI. LVII. LVIII. LIX. OBEDIENCE TO SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

Hebrews xiii. 17.—"*Obey them who have the rule over you.*" 585; 593; 600; 608

LX. SELF-LOVE.

2 Timothy iii. 2.—"*Men shall be lovers of themselves.*" . . 616

LXI. SELF-CONCEIT.

2 Timothy iii. 2.—"*Men shall be lovers of themselves.*" . . 621

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE

OF

DR. ISAAC BARROW:

TO

DR. TILLOTSON, DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

The affection of friends, or interest of the bookseller, has made it usual to prefix the Life of an author before his works; and sometimes it is a care very neccessary to give him a high and excellent character, the better to protect his writings against that censoriousness and misconstruction to which all are subject. What Dr. Barrow has left do as little as any need such an advantage, standing firm on their own worth; nay, his Works may supply the want of a history of his life, if the reader take along with him this general remark, that his Sermons were the counterpart of his actions; therein he has drawn the true picture of himself, so that in them *being dead he yet speaketh*, or rather, *is spoken of*. Heb. xi. 4. marg. Yet we the readers do gladly entertain any hopes of seeing his example added to his doctrine, and we think we express some kind of gratitude for your reviewing, digesting, and publishing his Sermons, if we desire from you his Life too. His Sermons have cost you so much pains, as would have produced many more of your own; if now his Life should ask a farther part of your time, it were still promoting the same ends, the doctor's honour, and the public good. What memorials I can recollect, I here present you, that when you have refined this ore, it may be admitted as my offering toward his statue. What may be said would have had a stronger impression upon our passions, when they were moved upon the first news of so great a loss; or perhaps it were best to forbear till the publication of all his Works, when the reader will be farther prepared to admire him. But I proceed in the order of time, that the other particulars occurring to your memory, or suggested by other friends,

may more readily find their proper place, and so give the better lustre to one another: and this I think the fitter to be observed, because the harmonious, regular, constant tenor of his life is the most admirable thing in it. For though a life full of variety, and even of contrariety, were more easy to be writ, and to most more pleasant to be read, it less deserves to be imitated.

Dr. Isaac Barrow was the son of Mr. Thomas Barrow, a citizen of London, of good reputation[a] yet living, brother to Isaac Barrow, late lord bishop of St. Asaph[b], son of Isaac Barrow, Esq. of Spiny Abbey in Cambridgeshire[c], where he was a justice of peace for forty years, son of Philip Barrogh, who has in print a Method of Physic, and had a brother, Isaac Barrow, doctor of physic[d], a benefactor to Trinity college, and there tutor to Robert Cecil, earl of Salisbury, and lord treasurer.

He was born in London, October 1630[e]: his mother was Ann, daughter of William Buggin, of North Cray in Kent, Esq.; whose tenderness he did not long enjoy, she dying when he was about four years old.

His first schooling was at the Charter-house for two or three years, when his greatest recreation was in such sports as brought on fighting among the boys: in his aftertime a very great courage remained, whereof many instances might be set down; yet he had perfectly subdued all inclination to quarrelling, but a negligence of his clothes did always continue with him.

[a] He was linen-draper to king Charles I. to whose interests he adhered, and followed him to Oxford. After the beheading of the king, Thomas Barrow attended his son Charles II. then in exile, and continued with him till the restoration. *Pope.*

[b] He was educated at Cambridge, and became fellow of Peter-house: but having written against the covenant, he was ejected by the earl of Manchester, chancellor of the university in 1643, and went to Oxford, where he became chaplain of New College. He continued in Oxford till the surrender of the garrison to the parliament forces; after which time he shifted from place to place, and suffered with the rest of the loyal and orthodox clergy, till the restoration of Charles II; when he not only recovered his fellowship at Peter-house, but was appointed fellow of Eton. In 1663 he was consecrated bishop of Man; and in 1664 he was made governor of the island by Charles earl of Derby; which office he discharged with considerable reputation. He was a great benefactor to the clergy of the island, having raised a large subscription, by which he bought up all the impropriations from the earl of Derby, and settled them upon the clergy. In 1669 he was translated to the see of St. Asaph; and his consecration-sermon was preached by his nephew, Isaac Barrow, in Henry the Seventh's chapel in Westminster-abbey. The cathedral and palace at St. Asaph were repaired by his liberality, and in other respects he was no small benefactor to the see. He died at Shrewsbury on the 24th of June, 1680, in the 67th year of his age, and was buried in the cathedral at St. Asaph. *Wood.*

[c] He was born at Gazeby in Suffolk in 1563.

[d] He died in 1616, and was buried in the church of All Saints in Cambridge. *Bloomfield.* He was son of John Barrow of Suffolk, and grandson of Henry Barrow. *Ward.*

[e] This date may be inferred from his epitaph, which states him to have died in 1677, at the age of 47; and also from the college register at Peter-house, which speaks of him as *annum agens decimum quartum* at the time of his admission in 1643. But Dr. Pope asserts, upon the authority of Barrow himself, that his birthday fell upon the 29th of February: "and if he said true, it could not be either in October or in 1630, that not being a leap-year."

For his book, he minded it not; and his father had little hope of success in the profession of a scholar, to which he had designed him. Nay, there was then so little appearance of that comfort which his father afterward received from him, that he often solemnly wished, that if it pleased God to take away any of his children, it might be his son Isaac: so vain a thing is man's judgment, and our providence unfit to guide our own affairs.

Removing thence to Felsted in Essex, he quickly made so great a progress in learning and all things praiseworthy, that his master appointed him a little tutor to the Lord viscount Fairfax of Emely in Ireland. While he stayed there, he was admitted in Peter-house, his uncle the bishop's college[r]; but when he removed to and was fit for the university of Cambridge, Feb. 1645, he was planted in Trinity college. His condition was very low, his father having suffered much in his estate on account of adhering to the king's cause; and being gone away from London to Oxford, his chief support at first was from the liberality of the famous and reverend Dr. Hammond, to whose memory he paid his thanks in an excellent Epitaph, among his Poems, wherein he describes the doctor and himself too; for the most, and most noble parts of the character do exactly agree to them both. Being now, as it were, without relations, he abused not the opportunity to negligence in his studies, or licentiousness in his manners, but seasoned his tender years with the principles and the exercise of diligence, learning, and piety, the best preparatives for the succeeding varieties of life.

The young man continued such a royalist, that he would never take the Covenant; yet carrying himself with fairness, candour, and prudence, he gained the good-will of the chief governors of the university. One day Dr. Hill, master of the college[s], laying his hand on his head, said, *Thou art a good lad; tis pity thou art a cavalier:* and when in an Oration on the Gunpowder-Treason he had so celebrated the former times, as to reflect much on the present, some Fellows were provoked to move for his expulsion; but the master silenced them with this; *Barrow is a better man than any of us.* Afterward, when the Engagement was imposed, he subscribed it; but upon second thoughts, repenting of what he had done, he went back to the commissioners, and declared his dissatisfaction, and got his name rased out of the list.

For the juniors, he was always ready to give them his help, and very freely; though for all the exercises he made for them in verse and prose he never received any recompense but one pair of gloves.

While he was yet a young scholar, his judgment was too great to rest satisfied with the shallow and superficial physiology then commonly taught and received in the universities, wherewith students of meaner abilities content-

[r] He was admitted December 15th, 1643, which was the year of his uncle being ejected from his fellowship. This was perhaps the reason of his entering afterwards at Trinity college.

[s] He was appointed by the parliament, who had ejected Dr. Comber for adhering to the king

edly took up: but he applied himself to the reading and considering the writings of the lord Verulam, monsieur Descartes, Galileo, and other the great wits of the last age, who seemed to offer something more solid and substantial.

When the time came that he could be chosen fellow of his college, ann. Dom. 1649[h], he obtained by his merit; nothing else could recommend him who was accounted of the contrary party. After his election, finding the times not favourable to men of his opinion in the affairs of church and state, to qualify him, as he then thought, to do most good, he designed the profession of physic, and for some years bent his studies that way, and particularly made a great progress in the knowledge of anatomy, botanics, and chemistry. But afterward, upon deliberation with himself, and conference with his uncle, the bishop of St. Asaph, thinking that profession not well consistent with the oath he had taken when admitted fellow, to make divinity the end of his studies, he quitted medicine, and applied himself chiefly to what his oath seemed to oblige him.

He was upon all opportunities so open and communicative, that many of his friends in that college, for out of it he had few acquaintance, can, and I hope some one will, report frequent instances of his calm temper in a factious time, his large charity in a mean estate, his facetious talk upon fit occasions, his indefatigable industry in various studies, his clear judgment on all arguments, his steady virtue in all difficulties, which they must often have observed, and can better describe.

Of his way of discourse I shall here note one thing, that, when his opinion was demanded, he did usually speak to the importance as well as to the truth of the question: this was an excellent advantage, and to be met with in few men's conversation.

Tractare res multi norunt, æstimare pauci. CARDAN.

While he read Scaliger on Eusebius, he perceived the dependence of chronology on astronomy, which put him on the study of Ptolemy's Almagest; and finding that book and all astronomy to depend on geometry, he applied himself to Euclid's Elements, not satisfied till he had laid firm foundations; and so he made his first entry into the mathematics, having the learned Mr. John Ray then for his *socius studiorum*, and always for his esteemed friend: he proceeded to the demonstration of the other ancient mathematicians, and published his Euclid in a less form and a clearer method than any one had done before him: at the end of his demonstration of Apollonius he has writ, *April* 14. *May* 16. *Intra hæc temporis intervalla peractum hoc opus.* To so much diligence nothing was impossible: and in all his studies his way was not to leave off his design till he brought it to effect; only in the Arabic language he made an essay for a little while, and then deserted it. In the same place

[h] He was elected scholar in 1647, and took his degree of B.A. in 1649. In 1652 he commenced M.A. and on the 12th of June in the following year he was incorporated in that degree at Oxford. *Ward. Wood.*

having also writ, *Labore et constantia*, he adds, *bonæ si conjungantur humilitati et subministrent charitati.* With these speculations the largeness of his mind could join poetry, to which he was always addicted, and very much valued that part thereof which consists of description; but the hyperboles of some modern poets he as much slighted: for our plays, he was an enemy to them, as a principal cause of the debauchery of these times; the other causes he thought to be the French education and the ill examples of great persons; for satires, he writ none; his wit was pure and peaceable.

When Dr. Duport resigned the chair of Greek professor, he recommended this his pupil for his successor, who justified his tutor's opinion by an excellent performance of the probation exercise; but being thought inclined to Arminianism, he obtained it not[i]: however, he always acknowledged the favour which Dr. Whichcote shewed him on that, as on all occasions. The partiality of others against him in that affair some thought might help forward his desire to see foreign countries. I make no doubt, but that he, who in lesser occurrences did very judiciously consider all circumstances, had on good grounds made this resolution[k]; for the reasons and counsels of action would take off from the dryness of this narration, and more strongly recommend him to imitation.

To provide for his voyage, ann. Dom. 1654[l], he sold his books, and went first into France: at Paris he found his father attending the English court, and out of his small *viaticum* made him a seasonable present. He gave his college an account of his voyage thither, which will be found among his Poems; and some further observations in a letter, which shew his piercing judgment in political affairs, when he applied his thoughts that way.

After some months he went to Italy, and made a stay at Florence; where he had the favour, and neglected not the advantage, to peruse many books in the great duke's library, and ten thousand of his medals, and discourse thereon with Mr. Fitton, the fame of whose extraordinary abilities in that sort of learning had caused the duke to invite him to the charge of that great treasury of antiquity[m].

Florence was too dear a place for him to remain in long[n]: his desire was to visit Rome, rather than any other place; but the plague then raging there, he took ship at Livorn, Nov. 1657[o], for Smyrna[p], where he made himself

[i] It was given to Mr. Ralph Widdington. *Biog. Brit.*

[k] Dr. Pope writes, "This disappointment, the melancholy aspect of public affairs, together with a desire to see some of those places mentioned in Greek and Latin writers, made him resolve to travel."

[l] In the Biog. Brit. it is 1655, where it is also said, "This same year his Euclid was printed at Cambridge, which he had left behind him for that purpose."

[m] This passage was misunderstood by Dr. Pope, who states, that the duke invited Barrow to undertake this charge.

[n] Here the straitness of his circumstances must have put an end to his travels, had he not been generously supplied with money by James Stock, a young merchant of London, to whom he afterwards dedicated his edition of Euclid's *Data*.

[o] The Biog. Brit. says November 6th, 1656, which appears to be correct.

[p] "In his passage from Leghorn to Constantinople, the ship he sailed in was attacked

most welcome to consul Bretton[q], and the merchants; and so at Constantinople, to sir Thomas Bendish, the English ambassador, and sir Jonathan Dawes, from whose civility he received many favours; and there ever after continued between them an intimate friendship.

As he could presently learn to play at all games, so he could accommodate his discourse to all capacities, that it should be grateful and profitable; he could argue a point without arrogance or passion to convince the learned, and could talk pleasantly to the entertainment of easier minds, yet still maintaining his own character, which had some such authority as is insinuated in those words of Cicero to Atticus, Ep. xx. l. 14. *Non te Bruti nostri vulticulus ab ista oratione deterret?*

At Constantinople, the see of Chrysostom, he read over all the works of that Father, whom he much preferred before any of the others, and remained in Turkey above a year. Returning thence to Venice, as soon as he was landed, the ship took fire, and with all the goods was burnt, but none of the people had any harm. He came thence home in 1659, through Germany and Holland; and some part of those travels and observations are also related in his Poems.

The term of time[r] was somewhat past, before which all fellows of Trinity college are by the oath obliged to take upon them priestly orders, or quit the college: he had no rest in his mind till he got himself ordained[s], notwithstanding the times were then very unsettled, the church of England at a very low ebb, and circumstances much altered from what they were when he took the oath, wherewith others satisfied themselves in the neglect of orders.

When the church and state flourished upon the king's restoration, his friends expected great things for him who had suffered and deserved so much: yet nothing came; so that he was sensible enough to say, which he has not left among his Poems[t],

Te magis optavit rediturum, Carole, nemo,
Et nemo sensit te rediisse minus.

by an Algerine pirate: during the fight, he betook himself to his arms, stayed upon the deck, cheerfully and vigorously fighting, till the pirate, perceiving the stout defence the ship made, steered off and left her. I asked him, why he did not go down into the hold, and leave the defence of the ship to those to whom it did belong: he replied, It concerned no man more than myself: I would rather have lost my life, than have fallen into the hands of those merciless infidels. This engagement he describes at large in a copy of verses in his works." *Pope.*

[q] He wrote an elegy upon his death.

[r] Seven years after the degree of M.A.

[s] By Brownrigg bishop of Exeter, and master of Catherine Hall, who, after being ejected from his see by the parliament, lived in retirement at Sonning in Berkshire.

[t] He wrote an ode upon that occasion, in which he introduces Britannia congratulating the king upon his return. It must have been during a visit to London, soon after the restoration, that he preached at St. Laurence Jewry for Dr. Wilkins, master of Trinity; when according to Dr. Pope the following extraordinary scene took place. "At the time appointed he came, with an aspect pale and meagre and unpromising, slovenly and careless-

1660, he was without a competitor chosen[a] to the Greek professorship in Cambridge; of which I can only say, that some friend to himself, I mean, thought fit to borrow, and never to restore those Lectures[b].

July 16, 1662[c], he was chosen to the Geometry Lecture at Gresham College, vacant by the death of Mr. Laurence Rook. Dr. Wilkins, who, while Trinity college had the happiness of his mastership, thoroughly observed and much esteemed him, and was always zealous to promote worthy men and generous designs, did interpose vigorously for his assistance, well knowing that few others could fill the place of such a predecessor; he not only discharged the duty incumbent on him, but supplied the absence of his learned colleague Dr. Pope, astronomy professor; and among other of his Lectures were divers of the Projections of the Sphere; which he lent out also, and many other papers we hear no more of[d]. He so well answered all expectation, and performed what Dr. Wilkins had undertaken for him, that when, in 1663[e], Mr. Lucas founded a Mathematic Lecture at Cambridge, the same good and constant friend recommended him to the executors, Mr. Raworth and Mr. Buck, who very readily conferred on him that employment: and the better to secure the end of so noble and useful a foundation, he took care that himself and successors should be bound to leave yearly to the university

ly dressed, his collar unbuttoned, his hair uncombed, &c." An alarm of fire having been given, great confusion ensued from the congregation endeavouring to escape; but the preacher, "seeming not to take notice of this disturbance, proceeds, names his text, and preached his sermon, to two or three gathered, or rather left together, of which number, as it fortunately happened, Mr. Baxter, that eminent nonconformist was one; who afterwards gave Dr. Wilkins a visit, and commended the sermon to that degree, that he said he never heard a better discourse." The rest of his small audience, with one exception, was not so well pleased: and some of the parishioners waited upon Dr. Wilkins, "to expostulate with him, why he suffered such an ignorant, scandalous fellow to have the use of his pulpit.—They wondered he should permit such a man to preach before them, who looked like a starved cavalier, who had been long sequestered, and out of his living for delinquency, and came up to London to beg, now the king was restored." Mr. Baxter, happening to be present at this expostulation, and being appealed to by Dr. Wilkins, said that Mr. Barrow preached so well, that he could willingly have been his auditor all day long:" upon which the complainants immediately changed their tone, and confessed "they did not hear one word of the sermon, but were carried to mislike it by his unpromising garb and mien, the reading of his prayer, and the going away of the congregation." They even went so far as to ask Dr. Wilkins to procure Mr. Barrow to preach again: but Mr. Barrow, to use the language of Dr. Pope, "could not by any persuasions be prevailed upon to comply with the request of such conceited, hypocritical coxcombs."

[a] His Latin oration upon that occasion may be seen in vol. III.

[b] He designed to have read upon the tragedies of Sophocles: but altering his intention, he made choice of Aristotle's Rhetoric.

[c] He took the degree of bachelor of divinity in 1661.

[d] His Latin Oration, previous to his Lectures is preserved, and is in Vol. III.

[e] On the twentieth of May, 1663, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, in the first choice made by the council after their charter. About this time also he was offered a very good living: but the condition annexed of teaching the patron's son made him refuse it, as too like a simoniacal contract. *Ward. Biog. Brit.*

ten written Lectures; and those of his which have been, and others yet to be printed, will best give an account how well he acquitted himself of that service.[f] But after that learned piece *Geometricæ Lectiones* had been some while in the world, he had heard only of two persons that had read it through; these two were monsieur Slusius of Liege, and Mr. Gregory of Scotland, two that might be reckoned instead of thousands: yet the little relish that such things met with did help to loosen him from those speculations, and the more engage his inclination to the study of morality and divinity, which had always been so predominant, that when he commented on Archimedes, he could not forbear to prefer and admire much more Suarez for his book De Legibus: and before his Apollonius I find written this ejaculation:

Ὁ Θεὸς γεωμετρεῖ.

Tu autem, Domine, quantus es geometra? quum enim hæc scientia nullos terminos habeat; cum in sempiternum novorum theorematum inventioni locus relinquatur, etiam penes humanum ingenium, tu uno hæc omnia intuitu perspecta habes, absque catena consequentiarum, absque tædio demonstrationum. Ad cætera pene nihil facere potest intellectus noster; et tanquam brutorum phantasia videtur non nisi incerta quædam somniare, unde in iis quot sunt homines tot existunt fere sententiæ: in his conspiratur ab omnibus, in his humanum ingenium se posse aliquid, imo ingens aliquid et mirificum visum est, ut nihil magis mirum; quod enim in cæteris pene ineptum in hoc efficax, sedulum, prosperum, &c. Te igitur vel ex hac re amare gaudeo, te suspicor, atque illum diem desiderare suspiriis fortibus, in quo purgata mente et claro oculo non hæc solum omnia absque hac successiva et laboriosa imaginandi cura, verum multo plura et majora ex tua bonitate et immensissima sanctissimaque benignitate conspicere et scire concedetur, &c.

The last kindness and honour he did to his mathematic chair was to resign it in 1669, to so worthy a friend and successor as Isaac Newton, fixing his resolution to apply himself entirely to divinity; and he took a course very convenient for his public person as a preacher, and his private as a Christian; for those subjects which he thought most important to be considered for his own use, he cast into the method of sermons for the benefit of others, and herein was so exact, as to write some of them four or five times over. He was only a fellow of Trinity college, till the bishop of St. Asaph[g] gave him a small sinecure in Wales, and the bishop of Salisbury, who very much valued his conversation[h], a prebend in his church; the advantages of both

[f] His prefatory Oration, spoken in the mathematical school, March 14, 1664, is still extant, in Vol. III. On May 20 in that year, he resigned his lectureship in Gresham college, though the two situations were not incompatible. He had also been invited to take the charge of the Cotton library; but after a short trial he declined it, and resolved to settle in the university.

[g] His uncle Isaac Barrow.

[h] Dr. Pope supplies the following information: "Some time after," not long after the restoration, "the bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Ward, invited Dr. Barrow to live with him, not as a chaplain, but rather as a friend and companion: yet he did frequently do the duty, if

which he bestowed in a way of charity, and parted with them as soon as he was made master of his college, 1672[i], he and his relations being by that time out of a necessitous condition: the patent for his mastership being so drawn for him as it had been for some others, with permission to marry, he caused to be altered[k], thinking it not agreeable with the statutes, from which he desired no dispensation.

He had possessed but a scanty estate, which yet was made easy to him by a contented mind, and not made a trouble by envy at more plentiful fortunes; he could in patience possess his soul when he had little else; and with the same decency and moderation he maintained his character under the temptations of prosperity.

When the king advanced him to that dignity, he was pleased to say, *he had given it to the best scholar in England.* His majesty had several times done him the honour to discourse with him, and this preferment was not at all obtained by faction or flattery; it was the king's own act, though his desert made those of the greatest power forward to contribute to it, particularly Gilbert, archbishop of Canterbury, and the duke of Buckingham, then chancellor of Cambridge, and formerly a member of Trinity college.

It were a disrespect to his college to doubt that where he had spent so much time, and obliged so many persons, he should not be most welcome. They knew, as his power increased, the effects of his goodness would do so too; and the senior fellows so well understood and esteemed him, that with good-will and joy they received a master much younger than any of themselves.

the domestic chaplain was absent. Whilst he was there, the archdeaconry of North-Wiltshire became void, by the death of Dr. Childerey, if I mistake not. This the bishop proffered Dr. Barrow; but he modestly and absolutely refused it, and told me the reason, which it is not necessary I should declare. Not long after a prebendary died, whose corps, I mean revenue, lay in Dorsetshire: this also the bishop offered him, and he gratefully accepted it, and was installed accordingly. I remember about that time I heard him once say, *I wish I had* 500 *pounds!* I replied, *That is a great sum for a philosopher to desire: what would you do with so much? I would,* said he, *give it my sister for a portion, that would procure her a good husband:* which sum in few months after he received, for putting a life into the corps of his new prebend: after which he resigned it to Mr. Corker, a fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge. All the while he continued with the bishop of Salisbury, I was a witness of his indefatigable study: at that time he applied himself wholly to divinity, having given a divorce to mathematics and poetry, and the rest of the *belles lettres,* wherein he was profoundly versed; making it his chief, if not only business, to write in defence of the church of England, and compose sermons; whereof he had great store, and, I need not say, very good."

[i] In 1670 he was created doctor of divinity by mandate. His patent of the mastership bears date February 13, 1672: and he was admitted the twenty seventh of the same month. "He was then the king's chaplain in ordinary, and much in favour with the duke of Buckingham, then chancellor of the university of Cambridge; as also of Gilbert, lord archbishop of Canterbury; both of whom were ready, if there had been any need, to have given him their assistance to obtain this place." *Pope.*

[k] Dr. Pope states that he chose rather to be at the expense of double fees, and procure a new patent: but the accuracy of this fact is denied in the Biographia Britannica

In that place, seated to his ease and satisfaction, a station wherein of all others in the world he could have been most useful, and which he meant not to make use of as a step to ascend higher, he abated nothing of his studies; he yielded the day to his public business, and took from his morning sleep many hours, to increase his stock of Sermons[m], and write his Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy. He understood popery both at home and abroad; he had narrowly observed it militant in England, triumphant in Italy, disguised in France; and had earlier apprehensions than most others of the approaching danger, and would have appeared with the forwardest in a needful time: for his engagement in that case, and his place in your friendship, I would, with the leave of the most worthy dean of St. Paul's, his highly respected friend, call him another Dr. Stillingfleet.

But so it pleased God, that being invited to preach the Passion-Sermon, April 13, 1677, at Guildhall chapel, he never preached but once more, falling sick of a fever: such a distemper he had once or twice before, otherwise of a constant health[o]: this fatally prevailed against the skill and diligence of many physicians his good friends.

I think not myself competent to give an account of his life, much less of

[m] With respect to his Sermons, Dr. Pope allows that they were too long. "He thought he had not said enough, if he omitted any thing that belonged to the subject of his discourse; so that his Sermons seemed rather complete treatises, than orations designed to be spoke in an hour. He was once requested by the bishop of Rochester, Dr. Sprat, then dean of Westminster, to preach at the Abbey, and withal desired not to be long, for that auditory loved short sermons, and were used to them. He replied, *My lord, I will shew you my sermon:* and, pulling it out of his pocket, puts it into the bishop's hands. The text was in the tenth chapter of the Proverbs, the latter end of the eighteenth verse: the words these, *He that uttereth slander is a fool.* The sermon was accordingly divided into two parts; one treated of slander, the other of lies. The dean desired him to content himself with preaching only the first part; to which he consented, not without some reluctancy; and in speaking that only, it took up an hour and an half. This discourse is since published in two Sermons, as it was preached. Another time, upon the same person's invitation, he preached at the Abbey on a holiday. Here I must inform the reader, that it is a custom for the servants of the church upon all holidays, Sundays excepted, betwixt the Sermon and Evening Prayers, to show the tombs and effigies of the kings and queens in wax to the meaner sort of people, who then flock thither from all the corners of the town. These perceiving Dr. Barrow in the pulpit after the hour was past, and fearing to lose that time in hearing, which they thought they could more profitably employ in receiving; these, I say, became impatient, and caused the organ to be struck up against him, and would not give over playing till they had blowed him down. But the sermon of the greatest length was that concerning charity, before the lord mayor and aldermen, at the Spital: in speaking which he spent three hours and an half. Being asked, after he came down from the pulpit, whether he was not tired, *Yes indeed,* said he, *I began to be weary with standing so long.*"

[o] He was dining with the bishop of Salisbury at Knightsbridge, and being observed by Dr. Pope, who was present, not to eat, he said "that he had a slight indisposition hanging upon him, with which he had struggled two or three days, and that he hoped by fasting and opium to get it off, as he had removed another and more dangerous sickness at Constantinople some years before. But these remedies availed him not, his malady proved in the event an inward, malignant, and insuperable fever." *Pope.*

his sickness and death: if great grief had not forced silence, you, his dearest and most worthy friend, had perpetuated the remarkables of that sad scene, in a funeral sermon.

Our passions, which have hitherto been kept within the banks, should now be permitted to overflow, and they even expect to be moved by a breath of eloquence; but that is not my talent. In short, his death was suitable to his life; not this imperfect, slight life, as I relate it, but that admirable, heroic life which he lived.

He died the fourth of May, 1677; and had it not been too inconvenient to carry him to Cambridge[p], then wit and eloquence had paid their tribute for the honour he has done them[q].

Now he is laid in Westminster-abbey, with a monument erected by the contribution of his friends, a piece of gratitude not usual in this age, and a respect peculiar to him among all the glories of that church. I wish they would bring in their symbols toward the history of his life. There are many which long before me had the advantage of his conversation, and could offer more judicious observations, and in a style fit to speak of Dr. Barrow.

In the epitaph, Dr. Mapletoft, his much esteemed friend, doth truly describe him. His picture was never made from the life[r], and the effigies on his tomb doth little resemble him. He was in person of the lesser size, and lean; of extraordinary strength, of a fair and calm complexion, a thin skin, very sensible of the cold; his eyes grey, clear, and somewhat short-sighted; his hair of a light auburn, very fine and curling. He is well represented by the figure of Marcus Brutus on his denarii; and I will transfer hither what is said of that great man.

> Virtue was thy life's centre, and from thence
> Did silently and constantly dispense
> The gentle vigorous influence
> To all the wide and fair circumference. COWLEY.

The estate he left was books[s]; those he bought, so well chosen as to be sold for more than they cost; and those he made, whereof a catalogue is annexed. It were not improper to give a further account of his works than to

[p] He had come to London on account of the election of scholars from Westminster school; and died "in mean lodgings, at a saddler's near Charing Cross, an old, low, ill-built house, which he had used for several years." *Pope.*

[q] Dr. Pope adds, that "my lord keeper, the earl of Nottingham, sent a message of condolence to his father, who had then some place under him, importing that he had but too great reason to grieve; for never father lost so good a son."

[r] It is stated in the Biographia Britannica, that some of his friends contrived to have it taken without his knowledge, while they diverted him with such discourse as engaged his attention. The picture was painted by Mrs. Beale, and in 1747 was in the possession of James West, esq. There is another in the master's lodge, which was given by Dr. Samuel Knight in 1791.

[s] "He left his manuscripts, I mean his written works, to Dr. Tillotson and Mr. Abraham Hill, committing it to their discretion to publish which of them they should think fit." *Pope.*

name them. Beside their number, variety, method, style, fulness, and usefulness, I might thence draw many proofs to confirm what I have before endeavoured to say to his advantage, and many more important reflections will be obvious. I will only say, that for his little piece, *The Unity of the Church*, he has better deserved of the church and religion, than many who make a greater figure in ecclesiastic history and politics.

There are beside other particulars, which are grateful to talk over among friends, not so proper perhaps to appear in a public writing. For instance, one morning going out of a friend's house before a huge and fierce mastiff was chained up, as he used to be all day, the dog flew at him; and he had that present courage to take the dog by the throat, and after much struggling bore him to the ground, and held him there, till the people could rise and part them, without any other hurt than the straining of his hands, which he felt some days after.

He seemed intemperate in the love of fruit; but it was to him physic, as well as food; and he thought, that if fruit kill hundreds in autumn, it preserves thousands. He was very free in the use of tobacco, believing it did help to regulate his thinking[t].

I did at first mention the uniformity and constant tenor of his life, and proceeding on, have noted several particulars of very different nature. I therefore explain myself thus; that he was always one, by his exact conformity to the rule in a virtuous and prudent conversation. He steered by the same compass to the same port, when the storms forced him to shift his sails. His fortune did in some occasions partake of the unsettledness of the times wherein he lived; and to fit himself for the several works he was to do, he entered upon studies of several kinds, whereby he could not totally devote himself to one: which would have been more for the public benefit, according to his own opinion, that general scholars did more please themselves, but they who prosecuted particular subjects did more service to others.

Being thus engaged with variety of men and studies, his mind became stored with a wonderful plenty of words wherewith to express himself; and it happened that sometime he let slip a word not commonly used, which upon reflection he would doubtless have altered, for it was not out of affectation.

But his life were a subject requiring other kind of discourses; and as he that acts another man, doth also act himself; so he that would give an account of the excellent qualities in Dr. Barrow, would have a fair field wherein to display his own. Another Camerarius or Gassendus would make

[t] Dr. Pope, who knew him well, describes his habits thus: "He was of a healthy constitution, used no exercise or physic, besides smoaking tobacco, in which he was not sparing, saying, it was an *instar omnium*, or *panpharmacon*. He was unmercifully cruel to a lean carcass, not allowing it sufficient meat or sleep. During the winter months, and some part of the rest, he rose always before it was light, being never without a tinder-box and other proper utensils for that purpose. I have frequently known him, after his first sleep, rise, light, and after burning out his candle, return to bed before day."

another Life of Melancthon, or Piereskius. What I am doing will not prevent them; I shall be well satisfied with my unskillfulness, if I provoke them to take the argument into better hands.*

All I have said, or can say, is far short of the idea which Dr. Barrow's friends have formed of him, and that character under which he ought to appear to them who knew him not. Beside all the defects on my part, he had in himself this disadvantage of wanting foils to augment his lustre, and low places to give eminence to his heights; such virtues as his, contentment in all conditions, candour in doubtful cases, moderation among differing parties, knowledge without ostentation, are subjects fitter for praise than narrative.

If I could hear of an accusation, that I might vindicate our friend's fame, it would take off from the flatness of my expression; or a well-managed faction, under the name of zeal, for or against the church, would show well in story; but I have no shadows to set off my piece. I have laid together a few sticks for the funeral-fire, dry bones which can make but a skeleton, till some other hand lay on the flesh and sinews, and cause them to live and move. You will encourage others by pardoning me, which I promise myself from that goodness wherewith Dr. Barrow and you have used to accept the small service with the great devotion of,

Your obedient humble servant,

ABRAHAM HILL.

London,
April 10, 1683.

* The ensuing anecdote of Barrow's examination preparatory to his being ordained is too instructive to be omitted; and claims admission in a Note, according to Mr. Hill's expressed desire.—"When Barrow presented himself with others for examination as a candidate for the ministry according to the established church in England—the old Prelate, whose eye had become somewhat dim, and whose natural strength, by reason of advancing years, had abated, proceeded to satisfy himself in a summary way, of candidates' qualifications, by addressing in turn to each one three test questions. Commencing with the first, he asked, "*Quid est fides?*" to which each answered in turn. Barrow stood last, and when the Bishop addressed to *him* the question, "*Quid est fides,*" he received the immediate and prompt reply—"*Quod non vides.*" The Bishop was a scholar, although age had somewhat benumbed his energy. On receiving this answer, he raised himself in his chair, and looking whence the answer proceeded, gave vent to his satisfaction in the exclamation, "*Excellente!*" He then commenced his second round, interrogating each in turn, as before—"*Quid est spes?*" to which Barrow as promptly replied, "*Non dum res!*"—"*Bene, Bene, excellentius!*" rejoined the gratified Bishop, and proceeded to his last question, "*Quid est caritas?*" From the others he received various replies, but when Barrow was addressed, he answered, "*Ah magister, id est paucitas.*" "*Excellentissime!*" shouted the good old man, unable to suppress his delight, "*aut Erasmus est aut diabolus!*"

MEMOIR

OF

DR. BARROW.

BY JAMES HAMILTON.

It has been so often remarked that the life of a scholar affords no materials for biography, that the saying has at last made itself true. We have few materials for the lives of most of our philosophers, and poets, and divines. Their names and their works survive, but their history is gone. It was allowed to perish, and the world has been defrauded of instruction, in some cases superior to that which their writings convey, because it was assumed that their history could not be told, or rather that theirs was no history at all. Taking it for granted, that noisy exploits and strange adventures are the only proper materials for the biographer, no one has told us of the difficulties which the scholar encountered in his unobserved career, the means by which he overcame them, and those efforts of genius and industry, and methods of study, by which he gained his eminence of literary renown. The result is before us, and we are welcome to admire it; but the means by which that result was attained, and which to many would have been more instructive, are for ever forgotten. The office of a biographer is not to tell the same sort of things about about all sorts of men, but to record those distinctive qualities and peculiar labours which made them what they were. It is to tell, in the case of such a man as Barrow, in virtue of what powers of mind—by what process of intellectual culture—from what advantages of study and training, he was enabled to write his Sermons, and his Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy; and in consequence of what mental bias or predisposing incidents he was led to write such books, rather than a New Herbal, or a Commentary on the Laws of England. It is to tell what made him *great*, and why he was a great theologian rather than a great physician or lawyer. But this is just the thing which it is very difficult for any one at this day to discover exactly, because his contemporaries considered themselves dispensed from the obligation. The notices in the Letter of Abraham Hill contain the principal facts of his *external* history—the schools at which he was educated, and the stations in the Church or University to which he was successively promoted. Some incidents of minuter and more characteristic significance are preserved in Dr. Pope's Life of the Bishop of Salis-

bury. Ward, in his Lives of the Gresham Professors, and Bayle in his Dictionary, have made *collectanea* of such materials as had fallen in their way. From these, with his Miscellaneous Works, and some occasional notices, elsewhere, we have endeavoured to compile an authentic narrative of our Author's Life.

There was an Isaac Barrow, son of another Isaac Barrow of Spiney Abbey, in Cambridgeshire, who held various important offices in the Church of England during the reign of Charles II. He was successively Librarian of Peterhouse, Cambridge; Chaplain of New College, Oxford; Fellow of Eton College, Cambridge; Rector of Downham; Bishop and Governor of the Isle of man; who died in 1680 Bishop of St. Asaph. This Dignitary we mention chiefly for the sake of warning the reader that he is not the Isaac Barrow whose Life we intend to write. From the identity of their names, and from their flourishing at the same period, and holding office in the same Church, the Bishop and his more illustrious nephew and namesake have often been confounded together; and as in a recent instance, not to the advantage of the greater and wiser man. The Bishop died at Shrewsbury, but was buried in the Cathedral Churchyard of St. Asaph, where his monument still stands, inviting the passers-by to pray for the soul of the departed prelate—'*O introeuntes domum Domini, orate pro anima Isaaci Barrow.*' We are not aware that it has ever been proved that this Popish inscription was a compliance with any request of Bishop Barrow himself; but it can in no way of fairness be identified with the more celebrated name of Dr. Barrow. The doctor died three years before his uncle the Bishop; and we need to say, that the tomb of one of the ablest assailants of Popery is not disfigured by "the mark of the Beast." Had the author of the Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy survived his titled relative, it is possible that the memory of both might have been saved from a stigma under which each has suffered, and that the tomb at St. Asaph's might have been as immaculate as the monument in Westminster Abbey.

Dr. Isaac Barrow was the son of Thomas Barrow, a citizen of London, and linendraper to Charles I.; and grandson to Isaac Barrow of Spiney Abbey. The exact date of his birth has been strongly contested, and may now be considered a hopeless æra in chronology. His executor and biographer, Abraham Hill, says that he was born in October 1630, and this account is apparently confirmed by the Doctor's father. But his friend Dr. Walter Pope asserts that he could not have been born either in October, or in 1630; for Barrow used to say, that the 29th of February was in one respect the best day of the year on which a man could be born—for whilst his fellow-collegiates treated him to a birth-day dinner once a-year, he required to entertain them in his turn but once in every four years. Leap-year did not fall on 1630.

At the age of four he lost his mother—a circumstance which may partly account for that boisterousness of disposition by which his boyish years were signalized—just as the linen-patent of the London merchant may have contributed its own share to the devoted loyalty of both father and son.

As the only expedient which held out any prospect of improvement, Mr. Barrow resolved on trying what a change of school and school-companions could accomplish, and for this purpose he sent his son to Felsted in Essex. There, under the skilful management of an anxious instructor, the energies of this impetuous youth were directed into a safer and more useful channel. He soon discovered such talent and trustworthiness, that his master appointed him preceptor to Lord Viscount Fairfax of Emely, then a pupil at Felsted. The responsibility of this new station was just the motive which Isaac Barrow needed, in order to concentrate his strenuous and vivacious mind on what would have otherwise been irksome learning, and to repress that fondness for obstreperous sports, which the "little tutor" felt would now be wholly out of character. His ardour thus rightly directed was never extinguished, and the bullying recklessness of the schoolboy became courage in the man. The combativeness remained—but he substituted arguments for blows.

When ready for the University, the distractions of the times had nearly foreclosed his farther progress. His name had been entered as a pensioner of Peterhouse, when his uncle, who had procured his admission to that college, was ejected for writing against the Covenant; and at the same instant, his father, who in better days might have maintained him at either University, was attending in patient poverty upon the King at Oxford. At this forlorn interval, the hopes of the youthful scholar, and as it eventually proved, the fame of Cambridge and the interests of science were rescued by a benevolent individual. This was Dr. Henry Hammond—one of those generous spirits whose rare beneficence looks to their contemporaries more like a severe protest than an encouraging example. One of the ways in which he displayed his zeal for religion, was by discovering and helping forward young men, whose talents and piety fitted them for the service of the church, as much as their poverty hindered them. Barrow was one of those whom he thus wisely and kindly aided; and the fact deserves to be had in remembrance, when his Hebrew and Gnostic learning are forgotten—if that shall ever be. In the present instance, Dr. Hammond lived to see his bounty rewarded in the distinguished talent and early eminence of his protegé; whilst Dr. Barrow lived to testify his gratitude in a copious Latin epitaph, which is exceedingly just in the main, though some of it appears to have been written for the sake of the antithesis.

The circumstances in which Barrow found himself at college would have damped a less ardent mind, and might have been abused by one less conscientious. But the knowledge that he had no patron on whom to depend, incited him to redoubled diligence, that he might become a patron to himself; and the feeling that he was now amenable to no earthly guardian, became a reason for setting a closer guard upon himself. It was his honourable diligence and steady deportment which recommended him to his college superiors.

The variety and success of those early studies are sufficiently attested by

the academic exercises preserved in his miscellaneous works, embracing a multitude of questions in physics, metaphysics, ethics, and theology. Thus, in the space of two years we have the following subjects discussed—and we give the list as an interesting sample of academic labours in the seventeenth century:—

Habitus humani acquisiti non sunt revera diversi a memoria humana.
Visionem fieri posse absque specie, aut imagine sensibili, probabile est.
Cartesiana hypothesis de materia et motu haud satisfacit præcipuis naturæ phænomenis.
Dantur rationes boni et mali æternæ et indispensabiles.
Dantur substantiæ incorporæ e natura sua immortales.
Dantur formæ substantiales.
Conscientia erronea obligat.
Christus per mortem fuit sacrificium proprie expiatorium pro peccatis.
Obedientia Christi non tollit obedientiam Christianam.

These exercises are chiefly entitled to distinction from the pliancy, profusion, and energy of their diction—we do not say from the purity of their idiom. There can have been no mannerism about Barrow, for he is the same in Latin as in English. If there be a difference, it is that he indulges himself before his academic audience more freely in his turn for sarcasm and irony, than he felt entitled to do in the presence of a Christian congregation. From his Oration on Commencement-day 1651, it would appear that the Puritan youth of a Presbyterian college had a relish for humour no less eager than their more jovial successors; for the entire address of the moderator is occupied with a denunciation of that immoderate love of mirth which had invaded the place of learning: "If it be true, as rumour tells, that you have so tired of all substantial fare as to nauseate the banquet of eloquence and the feast of sound philosophy—that nothing has for you any relish except painted comfits and unmeaning trifles—that not even wisdom will please you, unless without its own peculiar flavour; nor truth, unless seasoned with a jest; nor reason, unless soaked in fun—then in an unlucky hour have I been assigned as your purveyor, neither born nor bred to such a frivolous confectionary. The insatiable appetite of laughter keeps itself within no bounds. Have you crowded to this place for the purpose of listening, and studying, and making progress; or only for the sake of laughing at this thing, and making a jest of that other? As if Folly herself kept court amongst us—as if here were the market-place and universal emporium of nonsense—you drink in with greedy ears jibes, and squibs, and ribaldry, and then, when well considered and improved, set them all circulating again. There is nothing so remote from levity which you do not instantly—such is your alchymy—transmute into mirth and absurdity. And let a discourse be such as to move no laughter, nothing else will please—neither dignity, nor gravity, nor solidity—neither strength, nor point, nor polish." This oration is curious, in connection with the literary history of the age. Unless Barrow has allowed himself more than the usual rhetorical licence, the junior members of the university must have been a peculiarly laughter-

loving generation in the early years of the commonwealth. The passion for wit was stronger than the love of learning. If so, may not the puritanic quaintness have originated this unpuritanical distemper? And may not the wit and jollity of Charles the Second's court be referred in its origin to the schools of the Puritans? Such reactions are not unprecedented.

His scholarship and obliging disposition were so well known, that he found abundant employment in writing themes for companions less diligent or gifted than himself; though for all the services of this sort which he rendered, he never obtained any recompense except one pair of gloves.

The entire extent of his private studies cannot now be ascertained; but it is interesting to know that, weary of systems of natural philosophy, in which he found nothing of nature, he early betook himself to the reading of Des Cartes, Galileo, and Lord Bacon.

In 1649 he was elected Fellow of his college, and immediately resolved on the study of medicine. The reason of this choice was, that he saw no prospect of promotion to men of his persuasion in a church avowedly antiprelatic. He therefore applied himself with his wonted diligence to his medical studies, and soon made distinguished progress in the three sciences which then constituted a physician—anatomy, botany, and chemistry. It may here be remarked, that these are the only sciences to which he had been at any time addicted, of which he has left no express memorial in his works, and of which hardly a trace is discernible in his general compositions. The reason of this may have been, that he only applied to them for a short interval, and then relinquished them for ever. In these studies he had a companion, whose zeal might have gone near to make Barrow a naturalist like himself. This was the illustrious Ray, whom he had all along "for his *socius studiorum*, and sometimes his fellow-traveller in simpling, and always for his very much esteemed friend." It must have been ensnaring work to go *simpling* with the author of "Stirpes Britannicæ." But Barrow's medical career soon terminated. In a conversation with his uncle, he was convinced that his intentions were incompatible with the oath which he had taken on receiving his fellowship, by which he was bound to make theology his profession. With a promptitude of decision which does him credit, he at once abandoned what he hoped would be lucrative for what he knew to be right, and resumed the study of divinity.

The resumption of his theological investigations gave a new and important turn to his studies. In reading Scaliger's Notes on Eusebius, he was struck with the dependence of chronology on astronomy; and as it was not Barrow's way to learn anything by halves, or take on trust what he could ascertain for himself, he procured, as an introduction to astronomy, the Almagest of Ptolemy. But finding that this and all other astronomical works depended on mathematics, he laid them aside till he should master Euclid. However, once initiated in this enticing study, he did not find it so easy to recal from it his eager and vigorous mind; but the Conic Sections of Apollonius, the Spherics of Theodosius, the works of Archimedes, &c., followed in quick

succession. At the outset of his geometrical researches, he had for his associate his amiable friend John Ray; but the mathematician soon shot far ahead of the naturalist, and he was left to converse alone with the philosophers of Alexandria and Syracuse. As a proof of the ardour with which he prosecuted a study once begun, his executor mentions that he found written at the end of his copy of Apollonius—"April. 14—Mai. 16, Intra hæc temporis intervalla peractum hoc opus;" and the same gentleman mentions, that "in all his studies, his method was not to leave off his design till he had brought it to effect; except in the Arabic language, in which he made an essay for a little while, and then deserted it."

It was as a mathematician that Barrow first became known to the public. His edition of Euclid's Elements appeared at Cambridge in 1655, and was followed in two years by the *Data*. Unlike most editors of Euclid, he has given us the fifteen books of the Elements entire, occasionally substituting demonstrations of his own, or shortening and simplifying those of his author.

In 1654, Duport resigned the Greek professorship at Cambridge, and recommended his pupil, Isaac Barrow, for his successor. On this occasion he justified the good opinion of his patron, by a probationary exercise of distinguished merit: but the electors decided in favour of his competitor Ralph Widdrington. Barrow's friend and cotemporary, Abraham Hill, attributes his disappointment to a suspicion on the part of the parliamentary commissioners, that he held Arminian notions; whilst a more recent biographer discovers a likelier reason in Widdrington's relationship to the Speaker of Cromwell's Parliament.

Whatever were the reasons, Barrow lost the Greek professorship, and the disappointment confirmed a purpose of setting out to explore some foreign countries. We have somewhere seen it mentioned, that he obtained a travelling fellowship; but there is no hint of this in his correspondence, or in the earlier accounts of his life. In one of his letters to his own college, he tells them that he has reached Paris, and will take a breathing-time there until their approbation encourage him to complete his journey, or their censure compel him to break it off—"donec progressum suum aut vestra approbatione animatus absolvere, aut repræhensione deterritus abrumpere cogatur." But this might be said in complaisance to his former colleagues, without his being indebted to them for the means of putting his purpose in execution.

We cannot now well estimate the importance of foreign travel to the scholar, the philosopher, or the theologian of that day. When, in the absence of books of travel, foreign countries could only be known by being seen—when England contained no museum except some private cupboard of curiosities—and when the works of many classics and fathers, and some moderns, could only be seen in manuscript in some rich library,—the two or three years which a man of learning spent abroad were the most amassing period of his life, and he came home, not with the mere air of one that had seen the world, but a prodigy of learning and wisdom—the referee of fireside scholars, and the admiration of his less favoured or venturesome companions. If a man in those days wished to understand things thoroughly, like the Father of

history, he must go and see them for himself—witness Bishop Hall, John Ray, and James Balfour.

In the month of June 1655, Barrow left the shores of England. In an epistle of Latin hexameters, we have all the details of his voyage, performed—like most poetical voyages—in a crazy vessel, amidst sea-sickness, and retarded by a calm. At Paris he found the exiled court of Charles II., where his father was still in attendance, and like his prince, in poverty. It gratified the generous heart of Barrow, that out of his own slender resources he was able to administer to the wants of his father. The situation of Mr. Thomas Barrow gave his son near access to the Court, and favourable opportunities for observing the state of feeling in the high places of France. Those he improved with diligence, which showed a turn for diplomacy; and a long letter to his college, dated Feb. 7, 1656, presents us with some of the results of his observation.

"Here public affairs present an aspect of external tranquillity. Everywhere peace smiles with benignant aspect; the whole kingdom throughout, the din of arms is not heard. Without, fortune flatters with prosperity—within, all is afloat in luxury. In the palace, magnificence and revelry hold court—all is an endless round of play-acting, dancing, feasting, rejoicing—every man in his humour, and no day of evil coming. But what security there is for all this felicity, what heavings toward a storm may agitate the bosom of this deep, and what tempests may be struggling forth from the caverns of clandestine consultation, the more knowing must determine. The seeds of mischief have not yet shot through the thin mould that covers them; but perpetually watered as they are, it is easy for sharp eyes to see how far their roots are striking. For where violence is the basis, who can guarantee stability? and who can pledge the patience of an afflicted people, whilst the hooks of a ceaseless extortion are raking in their vitals? *cujus viscera perpetuis exactionum hamis exenterantur.* Where the memory of past wrong and the sense of present grievance inflame them against the nobles—where the administration of law is confided not to men of legal skill or blameless character, but to the best bidder—where military and civil promotion is irrespective of merit, and the strongholds of the public safety are opened by a golden key—where the soldiers, after lavishing their lives for the common weal, get promises for pay, and count it good luck when they get a tenth of their wages—where, in short, the people are retained in allegiance, not by the silken cords of kindness, but by the reins of terror and the force of fear,—where such scandals strike every eye, what tranquillity can be lasting?"

Then follows a character of the deep politician, at that time supreme in the councils of Louis XIV. As much in justice to Barrow as to Cardinal Mazarin, we give this sketch. "At the head of affairs is one sprung from the land of the giants, Sicily; who, rising from obscurity to the sacerdotal scarlet, presumed to dispute for the chief authority in the state with princes of royal lineage, and aided by their valour, prudence, and popularity—yet triumphed in the unequal contest. Again, battling with adverse

fortune, hurled from his eminence, in exile, and declared the public enemy, he contrived to procure his own return, to regain the helm, to check the triumph of his enemies, to convert some of them into instruments of his own, and drive the others off the field. Now that he is replaced in the seat of authority, he seems to occupy it more securely than ever. He has astricted to himself by matrimonial alliance, the chief of the nobility; the governors of the provinces wait upon his nod; and he has filled the frontier garrisons with men of his own creating, and who have nothing to hope except from him. The revenues of the realm flow through his coffers; and by him each appointment in the army, the state, the court, the law, is sold and settled, His word is law, his will the rule of duty, his command the decree of fate. Of course, one who managed to emerge from dust and darkness into such a splendour, who could project or execute such purposes, must have genius and great endowments. But these are all debased by abundance of dross. Whilst accounted powerful and fortunate, he has not yet earned the glory of greatness of soul. A want of good faith dims the lustre of good management, and a craving avarice imparts a meanness to all his grand exploits. Nor can he be popular to the last, who is monopolised by such a love of money. This is the engine which will hurl from its place our Marpesian rock—this Delos, *ἀκίνητον περὶ ἐοῦσαν*—which will upset this fortune so well founded and so strongly propped. Whilst by every device he scrapes together treasure for himself, along with the gold he pockets the hatred of the people; he is rich in money, but poor in good wishes; and whether his profits be not loss, time will discover."

Barrow was gratified to find that Protestantism was viewed with some favour at court. During an interview with the Queen, the Archbishop of Toulouse had complained of the progress of heresy in his province, and implored her Majesty's assistance in putting down those *seditious* innovators. The Queen instantly replied, that she had tried their allegiance, and had found them more faithful subjects than some who charged them with sedition. One of the marshals of France who stood by affirmed the same. And when the King, who happened to come up, learned the subject of conversation, he closed the discussion by saying, that he quite agreed with them, and would take care to perpetuate to his Protestant subjects every immunity secured to them by his predecessors.

Barrow gives a melancholy account of the state of learning in the university. With the exception of Arnauld, whom the Jesuits had expelled for favouring the Jansenists, and Robervalle, the mathematician, he looked in vain for a successor to the Petaviuses, the Sirmonds, and the Gassendis of the past. He was disappointed even with the extent of the collegiate buildings. Though they should all be piled into one mass, they could not rival Trinity, either in extent or magnificence. This mention of his Alma Mater gives occasion to his ending his epistle with a most passionate apostrophe to that home of his learning: "Though I should traverse all the regions on which the sun looks down, never do I hope to see the match of you! At the very thought of you, how is my spirit refreshed, and how does my heart

rejoice! How hard to be separated from you! how hard to think of any thing besides! To-morrow shall I turn my thoughts to Italy—to Germany next day. This day let me dwell with you. With you I began, and with you must end. The Most High defend you, and pour into your bosom peace and plenty, worth and wisdom!" Whatever might be Barrow's reason for setting out on his travels, disgust with the Fellows of his college was not the cause.

When some months had passed in Paris, he proceeded to Florence, where also he made a lengthened stay. The chief attractions of that city were the library and museum of the Grand Duke. Besides perusing many of the rarer volumes in that noble collection, he seems to have been much interested by the study of 10,000 medals, which formed a cabinet under the charge of Mr. Fitton, an English antiquarian patronised by the duke.

From Florence he wished to proceed to Rome, but was deterred by tidings of the plague. He therefore took advantage of an English vessel in the port of Leghorn, bound for the Levant, to prosecute his journey as far as Constantinople. He has given an amusing account of his voyage in a long set of Latin elegiacs. In this poem, by far the most admirable thing is his sketch of their English captain:—

> Cor bene compositum, frons exporrecta, benignum
> Ingenium, sermo comis, aperta manus.

On ship-board and at sea, so steady and so thoughtful—ashore, so reckless and jolly. As soon as he discharged his cargo, he dismissed his cares.

> Lætus amicorum cunctas circumvolat ædes,
> Alternusque illos in sua regna rapit.
> Colloquio, cantu, vino, conviva benignus,
> Tædia fert lucis, tædia nocte tulit.
> Integra ventre giganteo vineta recondit,
> Nec dubitat plenos evacuare cados.
> Nec vino cerebrum gerit expugnabile, &c.

During the voyage, the courage of that gallant commander was tested by an Algerine pirate. They were attacked in the Ionian Sea, but gave the corsair so warm a reception, that he was fain to sheer off, and leave them to prosecute their voyage. Throughout the engagement Barrow kept on deck, and stood to his gun with the rest of the crew.*

* Much earlier than this, Barrow had given a proof not more of great courage than great strength, and more than either, of a highly generous spirit. When a youth, he was on a visit to a friend in the country. Being a very early riser, he had sauntered out into the garden before any of the family had appeared; when a fierce mastiff, which had been let loose from his chain for the protection of the premises during the night, attacked him with great fury. He seized the animal by the throat, and contrived to throw him down and lie upon him; and whilst matters were in this situation, his first impulse was to despatch his assailant. However, it struck him that it would be exceedingly unjust to kill even a dog for doing his duty—as he himself had no business to be wandering about before break of day. Accordingly, exerting his voice, he called so loud that some of the household were alarmed, and hastening to his assistance, rescued the scholar and the dog from their perilous predicament.

After touching at Smyrna, they arrived at Constantinople in the close of 1657. Barrow's stay of twelve months at Constantinople is usually mentioned merely as a stage in his travels. To us it seems important as a stage in his mental history. It was at Constantinople that he formed his acquaintance with the works of Chrysostom. It must have been inspiration to read the Homilies of that prince of preachers, in the city where he penned and spoke them twelve centuries before. Do the Sermons of Barrow retain no trace of this inspiration? We cannot imagine such a student, in such circumstances, perusing page by page—for he read the whole—each folio of the great Greek father—without transfusing somewhat of his spirit into his own. It was for something better than quotations—though he quotes from him abundantly—that our author was indebted to John of Constantinople. In thus pointing out Chrysostom as one of the sources of Barrow's eloquence, we surely need not say that we are not charging him with plagiarism. Plagiarism is the vice of intellectual poverty; and a mind so rich in its own resources as to be capable of *thoroughly* appreciating Chrysostom would be incapable of stealing from him. It would have no occasion, and it would not know how to appropriate the pilfered treasure. Borrowed *materials* are not available to such minds, for they cannot be fitted into their own workmanship; but borrowed *skill* in the use of materials is always valuable.

During his residence in Turkey, Barrow was much occupied in studying the Mahometan religion. It possessed more theological importance in those days than now; for it was not then so decidedly the exhausted and waning superstition which it now is. It usually occupied a place second only to Popery in the systems of that century; but in the discourses of Barrow it receives a prominence which it did not usually obtain in the pulpit, and which shows that his mind had been specially arrested by its peculiarities. In his miscellaneous Latin works, are an epitome of the Turkish faith, and a very long fragment of a poem, "De Religione Turcicâ."

One of the most remarkable things in Barrow's travels is the number of friendships which he contracted as he passed along. At Florence, he not only gained the good graces of Fitton the medallist, but so completely attached to himself a young merchant from London, that when he was on the point of returning to England, because his finances were exhaused, his mercantile friend generously supplied him with as much money as he required. At Smyrna he received many attentions from the English consul, Spencer Bretton, on whose death he wrote a Latin Elegy, still extant. And at Constantinople he contracted a friendship, which lasted through life, with Sir Thomas Bendish the English ambassador, and Sir Jonathan Daws. Those friendships were not such deciduous intimacies as strangers of the same nation will form when casually thrown together in a foreign land; but they were cemented by a sincere and mutual affection, and became perpetual. This fact says much for the frank and amiable dispositions of our author. His delight in society might be almost inferred from the longing regrets with

which he recalls at a distance the pleasant fellowship of Trinity.* "Collo quiis istis lepidis, ingeniosis, proficuis, quoties me immiscui! Quoties foco vestro assidere visus sermonibus vestris avidus inhiavi, nec non ipse pro more meo raras voces, plerumque ad rem parum spectantes interserui!"

Immediately on his return, he procured Episcopal ordination from Bishop Brownrigg. In doing so, he gave a proof of his scrupulous conscientiousness. The statutes of Trinity require that every Fellow shall within a certain time enter into orders, or quit the college. At that period the statute was frequently violated. Many made the depressed state of Episcopacy a reason for not obtaining ordination, whilst they still continued on the foundation. Barrow's casuistry determined otherwise.

There was not a more loyal subject than Isaac Barrow. His devotion to the Stuarts was more than loyalty. It was idolatrous adulation.

> Tres modo Carolidæ; numero gaudet Deus isto,
> Lætitiam minui ne sinat ille suam;

hardly matched by his Epithalamium on King Charles and Queen Catherine—

> Και Σολομων αρκτοιο ὁ μεν, βασιλισσα νοτοιο
> Ἡδε, σοφοσ Καρολος, και Καθαρινα καλη, κ. τ. λ.

The Solomon of the north had no reason to complain of his share in the flattery; but if her Majesty had Greek enough to understand the flattery, she may have thought it a doubtful compliment to be styled "fair as the queen of the South." The Restoration excited his unfeigned joy, and no sermon of his concludes in more glowing strains than the Thanksgiving "upon the King's Happy Return." He was not content with prose. He dealt out his congratulation in sixty-five laborious Alcaics, and bestowed on General Monk a panegyric of nearly equal length:—

> Quæ te nunc altera, Monke,
> Laus manet, &c.
> Tu nisi nutantem validis cervicibus axem,
> Anglicus Alcides, fulcisti . . . .
> Bellerophon noster, nosterque Georgius, &c.

It is a pity that he should have stooped to panegyric so excessive, and—even though it had been true—so dangerous. It did no good either to the king or himself. Charles did not requite congratulatory odes with bishoprics. But the Restoration indirectly led to Barrow's preferment. It occasioned the resignation of the Greek chair by Professor Widdrington; and though an unsuccessful candidate before, he was elected without opposition. It would be difficult to name the professorship for which Barrow was not qualified, or

* Of his way of discourse I shall here note one thing, that when his opinion was demanded, he did usually speak to the importance as well as to the truth of the question: this was an excellent advantage, and to be met with in few men's conversation.

Tractare res multi norunt, æstimare pauci. HILL.

for which he could not soon have qualified himself. But we question whether a Greek prelection was the exercise for which he was pre-eminently fitted. That he was conversant with the language, and able to translate it, no one can doubt; but it may be doubted whether he possessed that Attic taste—that fine αισθησις—and delicate ear, which are as essential to make a fascinating or inspiring teacher, as a knowledge of syntax and synonymes is to make a sound and accurate scholar. No one will assert that Barrow was distinguished for an exquisite taste, still less that he was eminent for a musical ear. His attempts at versification in the dead languages abound in false quantities. He seems to have limited his proper business as a professor to the mere study of *words*. "Ut vocularum ludicrum aucupium morose non despiciam," &c.; and he speaks of his professorship as a grammatical tread-mill *pistrinum grammaticum*. But the surest proof of all is to be found in his own confession, that during the first year after his appointment, he lectured on Sophocles to empty benches!

It must, however, be said in his behalf, that he entered on the discharge of his new duties with a sufficient sense of their magnitude, and with a very humble depreciation of his own abilities. In his Inaugural Address, after enumerating his predecessors from Erasmus to Duport, he exclaims—"When I think of those men, so accomplished, so illustrious for their writings, crowned with such immortal fame, and then turn my eyes upon myself, and contemplate the narrowness of my genius, the weakness of my memory, the long interruption of my studies, the uncouth shabbiness of my style, and the scantiness of my entire intellectual furniture, a dreadful consternation seizes me, despair overwhelms me, a paleness suffuses my countenance discoloured by various emotion, thinking what a deed I have attempted, what a burden I am binding to my shoulders, to what a peril I am exposing my devoted head!"—"What am I, that with feeble arm I should handle the spear of Achilles? What a dwarf am I, that I should wrench his club from the fist of Hercules? I, a wasp, that I should chorus the Cicadas? such a jay, that after so many Attic nightingales, I should attempt a Grecian lay? In short, what am I, that I should essay a task which has tried the strength of men who have read more authors than I have seen, who have published more works than I can master, and who carry in their memories more books than I have collected in my library?"* He tells them, "that he cannot for very horror look down from his eminence on such an august assemblage, lest his head should grow giddy, and he should sink appalled under a sense of the incredible boldness which had elevated him so far above his proper station." It was not long till his considerate audience relieved his modesty; for in his next Oration from the same place, he tells them "that he has been sitting there, like Prometheus on his rock, muttering to deserted benches Greek phrases and derivations. Perhaps a wandering freshman had occasionally stumbled in, but as soon as he heard three words of tragic Greek he was sure to scamper off—till at last he was left in such a solitude, that he felt comforted in knowing that he could not disgust any more of them—for

* Oratio cum Græcæ linguæ cathedram ascenderit, 1660.

none of them were there." It appears that Sophocles had been the subject of his first course of prelections; but the tragedian having failed to secure an audience, he resolved to discard him, and in his second address started the question, Whom shall he substitute in his place? The election falls on Aristotle, and of the works of Aristotle, on the "Rhetoric of Theodectes." This, like the perusal of Chrysostom, we deem a significant event in the literary history of Barrow. From reading that *Oratio Sarcasmica*, we have no doubt that Aristotle was his master among the ancients. Some of the praise which he accumulates on his favourite may now appear excessive; but at all events, it proves the sincerity and ardour of Barrow's admiration. And we cannot help thinking him a wiser man, who read Aristotle till he found something to praise in him, than many since his time, who have no better reason for sneering at Aristotle, than that they have not read him, or have not capacity to understand him. Nor could Barrow have chosen, among all the works of the Stagyrite, one more suitable for the purposes of academic study than the Theodectean Rhetoric. In the present age it is little quoted, and more seldom read. But this is not because it is not the best book on the subject. It is a *severe* work. It has not the intrinsic literary attractions of Longinus or Cicero, or perhaps even Quinctilian; but for scientific purposes— for teaching the art of oratory—it is before them all. It is so philosophical and so practical—so comprehensive, and yet so brief—every aphorism founded in the deepest knowledge of our nature, and yet rendered so unostentatiously familiar, as to be fitted for the most common uses of the most unpretending speaker—that we are surprised and sorry that prejudice should have sent it into oblivion. Barrow was acquainted with it. He made it a text-book at Cambridge; but before that, we suspect he had made it a text-book for himself. It would not be difficult to illustrate almost every rule of the Aristotelian Rhetoric with examples from the Sermons of Barrow. In one particular, he would have contented the heart of his great preceptor—in always making logic the groundwork of his eloquence; for some of the most striking passages in Barrow are only logic animated. In another respect there is a remarkable difference betwixt the scholar and his master. In *style* they have no resemblance. Each may surely be allowed to have been master of his native tongue—but they show that mastery in a very different way. Aristotle shows it by always employing the fittest *word*—Barrow by employing appropriate *words*. In a language full of tempting synonymes, Aristotle showed a decisive promptitude of selection—in a scantier dialect, Barrow had not self-denial to reject a felicitous expression when it came, although he had already used another sufficiently expressive. With Aristotle, it is "exquisita dictionis proprietas"—with Barrow, "mirifica ubertas;" but singularly enough, with both the effect is "nervosa vis." When speaking of rhetoric, it may be worth while mentioning an exemplification of one of its figures rarely exemplified—we mean an abrupt termination—given by Barrow at the close of his discourse. Having announced that the subject of their future studies was to be the Rhetoric of Aristotle, he proceeds—"Expectatis jam forsan, imo metuitis, ut de rhetoricâ dicam

aliquid; ut eloquentiæ diutius immorer encomiis celebrandæ: quasi vero ipsa se satis rhetorica non esset dicendo; quasi non ad laudandam eloquentiam ipsa imprimis opus sit eloquentiâ, a quâ ego tam longe absum, tam vehementer abhorreo, ut ad ejus vel stupeam nomen, ad solam mentionem obmutescam. Dixi." We are not sure that the *cleverness* of this sentence is surpassed by anything in the author's Latin Orations.

The influence of Aristotle on Barrow is not a fact to be overlooked by those who study literary history for its most important purpose—the analysis of literary talent, or in other words, to discover the sources of literary greatness. The mould of Barrow's mind was not originally Aristotelian. It was rather formed after the type of Plato's—more mathematical than logical—more contemplative than didactic—remarkable for amplitude rather than concentration. But the taste of the times, and his occasions of study, brought him more conversant with the less congenial mind; and in Barrow we have an example of a Platonic genius tutored by the Aristotelian discipline. Others may discuss the question, whether it would have been for the advantage of such a genius to have been wholly left to its native bent? and whether Barrow would have been a greater man, had he not made Aristotle his idol? Of all the ancients there is none whom he extols so highly, quotes more frequently, or appears to have studied more carefully, than Aristotle.

July 16, 1662, having taken his degree of Bachelor in Divinity, he was elected Professor of Geometry in Gresham College, London. In this situation he gave a proof of the extent of his attainments, by supplying for a time the place of his colleague Dr. Pope, Professor of Astronomy, whilst himself discharging the duties of his own department.

Barrow had now obtained employment to his liking. The abstract sciences were those for which his mind was formed, and it was with an effort that he applied to any other. That was a propitious time for those sciences in England. They were reviving in the persons of Hooke and Wallis, and Wren and Collins, and without anachronism we may add, Newton. Their cultivation was no longer confined to insulated individuals; but they were prosecuted by such numbers, and with such success, that the need was felt of some *entrepôt* for their discoveries. The Philosophical Society at Cambridge, and the Royal Society in London, were the first fruits of that revival of the sciences. Barrow was not one of the original Fellows to whom the royal charter was granted, but he was elected, in the first choice made by the Council. He has not enriched the Philosophical Transactions by any paper of his own.

In the same year 1663, Mr. Lucas founded a professorship of Mathematics at Cambridge. Barrow's friend and patron, Bishop Wilkins, had sufficient interest with the trustees to procure the appointment for him. Not only had he discharged his obligations to Gresham College to the satisfaction of every one, but he had given a striking display of his rectitude and disinterestedness by declining an offer of rich preferment in the church, because the condition of teaching the patron's son looked too like a simoniacal compact. The same disinterestedness accompanied him back to Cambridge. He might, without violating any law, and even without injury to his patrons, have

maintained his place in Gresham College, along with his Lucasian Professorship. But as his own exigencies, and still less the interests of science, did not require it, he resigned his appointment in the metropolis and went to live at Cambridge.

This was the third professorship to which Barrow had been elevated within a period of four years. His inaugural address on each occasion is much in the same strain. They begin with an eulogium. In taking possession of the Greek chair he praises his predecessors—in entering on the Gresham and Lucasian professorships he extols the founders. These panegyries occupy about half the oration, and suggest another topic by way of contrast—the depreciation of himself. "Infantulum Herculi, pumilionem Atlanti, Phaetontem Phœbo quendam successisse." This is usually the least manly and tasteful part of the performance. Such extravagant self-debasement in public, and in language of studied eloquence, is dangerous humility. There is a pride in thus ostentatiously trampling on our pride, and it is sure to obtain no credit with the audience. The following sentence with which he concludes his opening lecture in the mathematical school, is the only becoming sentiment of the kind which we have noticed, and it is happily conceived. "If I have tired you," he says, "facile me consolabor, quinimo magnopere congratulabor mihi, validum inde deducturus argumentum, certum augurium desumpturus, quod optimum me hodie præstiterim mathematicum, hoc est, pessimum oratorem." The only other thing which those orations contain is an argument for the pre-eminent excellence of that department of study on which they are about to enter. An opening lecture can furnish little scope for variety, when even Barrow's have the appearance of *recipe*.

Barrow retained his professorship for six years only, and as he then took a formal leave of Geometry, this may be the place—though it should occasion our anticipating a few incidents—to give some account of his mathematical studies.

His editions of Euclid's Elements and Data have been mentioned already. His next publication did not appear till 1672. It was his "Lectiones Opticæ," which he prepared for the press at the close of his professional labours, and dedicated to the executors of Mr. Lucas as the first-fruits of their endowment. Among the friends who had urged the publication of these Lectures, was his pupil Isaac Newton. In his preface he mentions, that "D. Isaacus Newton, Collega noster, peregregiæ vir indolis ac insignis peritiæ," had revised the text, and not only suggested some corrections, but supplied some important additions from his own store. Another friend who had much to do in the publication of the Lectures was John Collins, whose extensive correspondence with the mathematicians of the seventeenth century, both at home and abroad, has since been given to the world, under the title of "Commercium Epistolicum."* The following are two of the letters which

* The reader will find Barrow's mathematical correspondence at the end of this Memoir. It is characteristic of the man, and in many ways curious.

Barrow addressed to his zealous friend, whilst his "Optics" were in the press:—

"*Easter-Eve*, 1669.

"Dear Sir,

"I have received all yours. The first, if it had been delivered to me in time, might have prevented you some trouble; for had I known Monsr. Huygens had been printing his *Opticks*, I should hardly have sent my booke. He is one that hath had considerations a long time upon that subject; and is used to be very exact in what he does; and hath joyned much experience with his speculations. What I have done is only what in a small time my thoughts did suggest, and I never had opportunity of any experience; so that I have great reason to believe what he hath done with so much advantage in all respects, will be much more perfect. Yet seeing perhaps there may be in mine some things, which have not occurred to him, or which he did not intend to consider, you may, if you think good, proceed in ordering the impression; the manner of which I wholly refer to your discretion. I have severall, new I suppose, geometricall theoremes of a general importance; which perhaps I may put together, and add as an *appendix*, having digested them into Lectures, &c. I intended to send you some of them, but my busynesse hath hindered me; which, besides pupills and other ordinary employments, hath been imposed upon me by the College. Tis to make Theological Discourses, as our Statutes order, upon the chiefe points of Catechisme, the Creed, Decalogue, Lord's Prayer, Sacraments, &c. which out of terme so takes up my thoughts, that I cannot easily apply them to any other matter. For I have that imperfection, as not to be able to draw my thoughts easily from one thing to another."

"*April* 23, 1670.

"Dear Sir,

"I received your last, and thereby perceive that your honest printer is yet somewhat slow in performance. I request you to blott out those four verses inscribed *Juventuti Academicæ;* for a friend, whose advice I asked, hath persuaded me that they are not proper. For the 13th Lecture, being I tooke the pains to exscribe it, and prepare it, as well as ever I should doe it, as I thinke, I had rather it should passe; but am content you should doe therein as you please . . . . .Concerning the character which you spoke of, of my bookes, I shall esteeme myself obliged to you, if you will effect that there be nothing said of them in the *Philosophicall Reports* beyond a short and simple account of their subject. I pray let there be nothing in commendation or discommendation of them; but let them take their fortune or fate *pro captu lectoris*. Any thing more will cause me displeasure, and will not doe them or me any good."

The sensible and modest request conveyed in the close of this letter was strictly complied with—for though an account both of his *Lectiones Opticæ* and *Geometricæ* was inserted in the Philosophical Transactions, vol. vi.

there is not a word either "in commendation or discommendation." Their *fate* was to be very little noticed at the time; for after they had been several years in the world, he heard of only two men who had given them a careful perusal, Slusius of Liege, and James Gregory in Scotland. The latter had seen the Lectiones Opticæ, and writes thus to Collins—"Mr. Barrow in his Opticks sheweth himself a most subtil geometer, so that I think him superior to any that ever I looked upon. I long exceedingly to see his *Geometrical Lectures*, especially because I have some notions upon that subject by mee. I entreat you to send them to mee presently, as they come from the presse, for I esteem the author more than yee can imagine." Though he could not but be gratified with the approbation of such a man, he could not afford to publish for so select a circle of readers; and the general neglect of such subjects tended to produce in his own mind a dissatisfaction with the science itself. For though his edition of Apollonius, &c. appeared subsequently to his Optics, it had been prepared for the press before them; and with the publication of the latter work he seems to have taken leave of mathematics altogether. He resigned the chair in 1669, and at his own request was succeeded by his favourite pupil, the immortal Newton.

The value of Barrow's mathematical labours has been underrated by some recent writers. The following is the fairest estimate of their importance which we remember to have met with:—"His *Lectiones Geometricæ* are filled with profound investigations respecting the properties of curvilineal figures; and in the method of tangents which he has explained in that work, we clearly discover the germ of the fluxional calculus. This ingenious method, which is a great simplification of the rule given by Fermat, differs in nothing but the notation, from the method of finding the subtangent by the Differential Calculus. The Optical Lectures of Dr. Barrow are distinguished by the same original views which characterize his Lectures on Geometry. His beautiful theory of the apparent place of objects seen by refraction or reflection, and the elegant determinations which he has given of the form of the images of rectilineal objects received from mirrors and lenses, entitle him to the highest praise. By pushing these researches a little farther, Barrow could not fail to have discovered the caustic or Tschirnhausenian curves."* To this we add the service which he rendered to mathematical science by restoring the works of some of its great fathers. To publish improved editions of Euclid, Archimedes, Apollonius, and Theodosius, should of itself have procured for Barrow a place of note in the history of mathematical learning. But he had a still more original merit in the improvements which he introduced into the language of geometry. He discarded many of the cumbrous circumlocutions which had been considered essential to the ancient strictness, and by a judicious employment of symbols did much to promote its perspicuity. At the same time he had too high veneration for the approved methods of antiquity, to substitue in their place

* Edin. Encyclop. Art. *Barrow*.

the notation which then began to prevail. For this he was often commended by Newton.*

After all, it is frivolous to be disputing about the extent of Barrow's mathematical acquirements. His fame does not rest on the fact of his having held two geometrical professorships in succession—of his having been admired by the greatest mathematicians of the day—of his having been the tutor and predecessor of Newton. It rests on his works, and these are such that we do not know any one throughout the whole of the last century who ever doubted his pretensions. Even those who had not sense enough to understand his Sermons, allowed that he was a mathematician.† Montucla, who called him a poor philosopher because he believed in the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, is full of "admiration" and "enchantment" when he speaks of the fertility of ideas and the multitude of new and curious theorems "de ce *savant* géomètre."‡

Yet fascinating as he found his favourite science, he seems to have been haunted for some time before he quitted it with an uneasy feeling that there was a science yet nobler on which he ought to be employed. To divinity he had early determined himself, and one occurrence after another had diverted him from its special prosecution. During the last years of his professional life, this uneasiness appears to have increased upon him.

Barrow's was not an unusual situation. He felt that he was held fast in the bond of a science which had early caught and enchained him; and yet he knew that he was not where he ought to be, till once he had given himself wholly to another which had still earlier and holier claims upon him. His first attempt was a compromise. He sought to impart a theological complexion to his mathematics. If he could not give himself to Bible divinity, he would at least study a divine philosophy. But he found that even this would not satisfy the claims of conscience. At his ordination he had vowed to serve God in the Gospel of his Son, and he could not make a Bible out of Euclid, nor a pulpit out of his mathematical chair. His only redress was to quit them both.

The full extent of the feelings at work in the mind of this conscientious man, we have not the means of determining. May we hope that God, by his Spirit, was teaching him to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord?" Or was it only that he felt unhappy till he was engaged in the work which he had selected for the business of his life? Whatever was the reason, his abdication of the professorship confirms the remark, that "*his whole history is one of resignation of profits upon principle.*"

* Pemberton's "View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy."—Preface. Pemberton's own opinion of Barrow is, that "he may be esteemed as having shewn a compass of invention equal, if not superior to any of the moderns, Newton only excepted."

† "Isaac Barrow, Theologian obscur, mathematicien plus connu." *Encyclopedie Methodique.*

‡ Montucla Histoire des Mathematiques, An. VII. tom. ii. p. 88.

After this he lived quietly a fellow of his College, busied only in writing Sermons, many of which were never preached. The only preferment in the Churchwhich he obtained, was first a small sinecure in Wales from his uncle the Bishop of St. Asaph; and afterwards a prebendal stall in the Cathedral of Salisbury, from his friend Dr. Seth Ward, its Bishop. This preferment brought no increase of fortune to the contented holder; for he dispensed all the income in charity, and resigned both the one and the other as soon as he reached the summit of his earthly ambition in being made Master of Trinity College.

That appointment took place in 1672. His predecessor was Dr. Pearson, whose ablest work is, like Barrow's own, an Exposition of the Creed. We suppose that the world is indebted for both works—one of them the most learned, and the other the most eloquent Exposition of the Apostles' Creed in the English language—to that statute of Trinity alluded to in Barrow's letter formerly quoted. Dr. Pearson was promoted to the Bishopric of Chester, and Barrow to the Mastership of Trinity. On that occasion the King made some small amends for the neglect with which he had, throughout twelve years, treated the loyal son of a devoted servant. His Majesty had surely been long in discovering his most learned subject, and must have thought learning easily rewarded, when he had no bishopric to bestow on him, who, he said, "was the best scholar in England."

As Andrew Melville said of the Kirk, he could say of his College—that he was wedded, and exceedingly indulgent to it. That wealthy corporation had been accustomed to uphold its credit for opulence by the style in which it maintained its Master. He was allowed the luxury of a coach, and had a variety of perquisites from the College revenue. All these Dr. Barrow remitted, and adopted wiser expedients for sustaining the magnificence of the foundation. He set on foot a subscription for building a College library, and made prodigious exertions in furthering his cherished project. Besides his own pecuniary contributions, which were large, he wrote letters to rich and influential personages, chiefly those who had been *alumni* of that College; and not content with soliciting their support, he always made a point of acknowledging any countenance which they might have given. The result of his zeal and unremitting labours, was the erection of an edifice which has ever since been one of the architectural glories of Cambridge, and which has from time to time received, in addition to its other acquisitions, the entire libraries of learned collectors.

The only incident of a public kind which broke in upon the active retirement of his College life, was his election to the Vice-Chancellorship of the University—the duties of which did not prove onerous, and as soon as they were discharged, he gladly relinquished an office which he coveted the less because it was counted an honour.

The Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy he did not live to publish. The state of his manuscript, preserved in Trinity College Library, indicates the prodigious pains which he had bestowed upon it, chiefly in the compilation of authorities. As it is, no one can open it at any page without being

struck by its amazing research. Yet Barrow was not satisfied with what he had already quoted. Many confirmatory passages were still in his mind, for the insertion of which he had left blank spaces at the time. When on his death-bed, he placed the whole in the hands of Dr. Tillotson, saying, "I hope it is indifferent perfect, though not altogether as I intended it, if God had granted me longer life." Had he himself not indicated those omissions, no one could have detected them. "No argument of moment, nay hardly any consideration properly belonging to it, hath escaped his large and comprehensive mind. He hath said enough to silence the controversy for ever, and to deter all wise men, of both sides, from meddling any farther with it."* What the Archbishop has said about its *arguments* is equally true of its *testimonies*. In the words of a modern critic,—"We can imagine nothing whereunto to liken the glorious work of Barrow, but the mighty telescope of Herschel—an instrument which brings up, from the abyss of space, a countless multitude of luminaries, which hid themselves from the search of unassisted vision. Even so does the gigantic labour of Barrow call up from the depths of antiquity a galaxy of witnesses, who pass over our field of view in perfect order and distinctness, and shed a broad and steady illumination over the path of the inquirer."†

He was in the prime of life, and "occupying" amidst these labours, when the messenger of death came for him. He had gone to London in 1677, and on April 13, preached the Passion Sermon at Guildhall. This was the second sermon for which he ever received a pecuniary recompense, and was the last sermon, save one, which he ever spoke in public. It is a long discourse, and in some respects the most remarkable and intersting in his collected works. The exertion of delivering this sermon brought on a cold, which terminated in fever. The following account of his last sickness is from the pen of his affectionate friend Dr. Pope:—"The last time he was in London, whither he came, as it is customary, to the election of Westminster scholars, he went to Knightsbridge to give the Bishop of Salisbury a visit, and then made me engage my word to come to him at Trinity College immediately after the Michaelmas ensuing. I cannot express the rapture of joy I was in, having, as I thought, so near a prospect of his charming and instructive conversation, I fancied it would be a heaven on earth; for he was immensely rich in learning, and very liberal and communicative of it, delighting in nothing more than to impart to others, if they desired it, whatever he had attained by much time and study: but of a sudden all my hopes vanished, and were melted like snow before the sun."

The following particulars are recorded in the life of his successor, Dr. John North; though there seems to be a discrepancy regarding the place of his death:—"The good Dr. Barrow ended his days in London, in a prebend's house, that had a little stair to it out of the cloisters, which made him call it a *man's nest*, and I presume it is so called at this day. The Master's disease was a high fever. It had been his custom, contracted

* Archbishop Tillotson, in his Preface.

† British Critic, vol. ii. p. 149.

when he was at Constantinople, in all his maladies, to cure himself with opium. And being very ill, probably augmented his dose, and so inflamed his fever, and at the same time obstructed the crisis; for he was as a man knocked down, and had the eyes of one distracted. Doctor North seeing him so, was struck with horror; for he, that knew him so well in his best health, could best distinguish; and when he left him, he concluded he should see him no more; and so it proved."

Dr. Barrow was buried in Westminster Abbey. His friends, by a subscription among themselves, erected a marble monument, surmounted by a bust, to his memory. The inscription on that monument was composed by Dr. Mapletoft, Professor of Physic in Gresham College, who, like Barrow himself, afterwards relinquished medicine for the ministry.

ISAACUS BARROW.

S. T. P. Regi Carolo II. a Sacris.

Vir prope divinus, et vere magnus, si quid magni habent
Pietas, probitas, fides, summa eruditio, par modestia,
Mores sanctissimi undequaque et suavissimi.

Geometriæ Professor Londini Greshamensis,
Græcæ Linguæ, et Matheseos apud Cantabrigienses suos.
Cathedras omnes, ecclesiam, gentem ornavit.

Collegium S. S. Trinitatis Præses illustravit,
Jactis Bibliothecæ vere regiæ fundamentis auxit.

Opes, honores, et universum vitæ ambitum,
Ad majora natus, non contempsit, sed reliquit seculo.

Deum, quem a teneris colluit, cum primis imitatus est
Paucissimis egendo, benefaciendo quam plurimis,
Etiam posteris, quibus vel mortuus concionari non desinit.

Cætera, et pene majora ex scriptis peti possunt.

Abi, Lector, et æmulare.

Obiit IV. die Maii, Ann. Dom. MDCLXXVII.
Ætat. suæ XLVII.

Monumentum hoc Amici posuere.

"What-like a man was Isaac Barrow?"—That question could have been more easily answered, were we in possession of an authentic portrait.

The ensuing anecdote develops Barrow's preference of wisdom to money.—

Of his general habits not much now can be told. He was a very early riser, and with two exceptions, the immoderate use of fruit and tobacco, he was very temperate in his habits.

"We were once going from Salisbury to London, he, Barrow in the coach with the Bishop, and I on horseback. As he was entering the coach, I perceived his pockets strutting out near half a foot, and I said to him,—"What have you got in your pockets?" He replied, "*Sermons.*" "Sermons!" said I, "give them to me, my boy shall carry them in his portmanteau, and ease you of that luggage." "But," said he, "suppose your boy should be robbed?" "That is pleasant," I said; "do you think that there are persons padding on the road for sermons?" "Why, what have you?" said he. "It may be five or six guineas," I answered. Barrow replied, "I hold my sermons at a greater rate, for they cost me much pains and time." "Well then," said I, "if you will secure my five or six guineas

against *lay-padders*, I will secure your sermons against *ecclesiastical highwaymen!*" This was agreed. He emptied his pockets, and filled my portmanteau with his divinity; and we had the good fortune to come safe to our journey's end, and bring both our treasures to London." Pope's Life of Ward, Page 143.

Though at one period of his life he had suffered much from the narrowness of his fortune, he never was infected with the love of money, nor of the luxuries which money can procure. Had he accepted and retained all the lucrative preferments which were offered to him, he would have spent his latter years in opulence; but he never failed to resign such preferment as soon as he could dispense with it; and when he did at last accept an offer which many would have coveted for its emoluments, he showed that he was ambitious of it for better reasons, by relinquishing most of its worldly advantages. The same indifference to money appears in one of his letters to Collins, from which it appears that his publisher had realized some hundreds of pounds by the sale of his Euclid, but had not been very exact in his accounting. Still, rather than have any dispute, or "do the shadow of an injury" to the widow of his bookseller, he would say no more about the matter. Almost all the property which he left was his library. It was so well selected, that it sold for more than it cost.

His good-nature seems to have been inexhaustible. The easy facetiousness and rich instruction of his ordinary discourse drew many around him, and there is no instance of his having ever vexed or injured any one by a mischievous or unguarded remark. "Of all the men I ever had the happiness to know," says Tillotson, "he was the freest from offending in word, coming as near as is possible for human frailty to do, to the perfect idea of St. James, his *perfect man*." It is one of the regrets of his executor, Hill, that he could hear of no enemy and no calumny from which to vindicate him. The happy equability of his spirits, his superiority to selfish considerations, his humility and large benevolence, secured for him an unusual amount of affection and good will. It made little matter where he dwelt—for if he had not friends before him he soon could make them, and he always carried good wishes along with him. The "friends of Barrow" were a large community, of which he was the unconscious centre—many of them drawn towards one another chiefly by their regard for him—and yet so quiet was his fascination, that it was not till they lost him that they knew how they had loved him.

His obliging turn exposed him to inconveniences, with which it required some self-denial to bear. But there is no merit in obliging where it costs nothing. His time was much encroached on when a student by the importunites of his idle acquaintances to supply them with College themes, and to assist them out of other difficulties in which their dread of study, and perhaps sometimes their love of his society, had involved them. And in after days, older friends took a like advantage of his talents and his facility. His Prelections on Aristotle, his Perspective Lectures, and one manuscript after another, disappeared in the custody of some learned friend, who found

it the easiest way to become famous, to make the originalities of another his own.

It was his plan, in whatever he engaged, to prosecute it till he had brought it to a termination. As the reader may remember, he speaks of it as his "imperfection, not to be able to draw his thoughts easily from one thing to another." In consequence of this "imperfection," he soon completed whatever he undertook. The only exception was an attempt which he made to learn Arabic. He soon abandoned it, probably from an idea that it would not repay the labour of acquisition. The morning was his favourite time for study.

His executors were Dr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and Abraham Hill. It was under the careful revision of the former, and with a biographical preface by the latter, that his Theological Works made their appearance in 1683, in three volumes folio.

Concerning these, what can we now say that has not been anticipated by the admiration of the thousands who have read them during the last century and a half? In regard to their best merit—their usefulness as discourses on religion—there is scarcely exaggeration in the saying of their editor, that "he must either be a perfectly good or a prodigiously bad man, that can read them without being the better for them." The same remark may be extended to their literary excellence. He must be singularly fastidious, or singularly dull, who can read them without pleasure; and either perfect in eloquence, or prodigiously incapable of it, who can read them without advantage.

In reading Barrow's Sermons there is one circumstance which ought not to be forgotten. He seldom had the advantage of addressing any of them to an assembled audience. When a subject appeared to him important, or had long occupied his thoughts, or when he expected that it would be for his own advantage to turn upon it his special attention, his plan was to select a text and compose a sermon. In choosing this form he had an ulterior view to the benefit of others, but in preparing it, the preaching of it was the remote and contingent consideration. Bearing this in mind, we shall be better able to account for many things, which in a sermon immediately intended for the pulpit, it would be difficult to justify; such as the excessive length of some, and the portentous learning of others. Had Barrow written those discourses for a congregation whom he was in the habit of meeting from Sabbath to Sabbath, and with whom he was holding week-day converse from house to house—so as to measure their capacity and ascertain their moral and spiritual wants—his good sense would have suggested many alterations, which would have brought them nearer the form of a popular address. Hill tells us, that "had he been a settled preacher he intended them shorter, and he would have trusted to his memory." Had he been *settled*, their brevity would not have been the only alteration. The long paragraphs would have been shortened; the Greek and Latin would have been translated; the scholastic phrases would have been omitted; and Aris-

totle and Seneca would have been more sparingly quoted. By this process their value to the scholar and theologian might have been lessened; but they would have become safer models of pulpit eloquence.*

On the few occasions when Barrow did appear in public, he seems to have given his written sermons in their unabridged dimensions. His "Spital Sermon," on "The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor," was delivered at full length; and we can quite believe the assertion, that three hours and a half were spent in speaking it. When it was finished, and he was asked if he was not tired, he acknowledged "that he began to be weary of *standing* so long." We are not told whether the patience of the aldermen held out to the close of this long infliction; but occasionally the endurance of his auditory gave way. At one time, when preaching in Westminster Abbey, the hour allowed for the sermon had expired, and a multitude of people had, as usual, assembled for the purpose of viewing the interior. The servants, who saw no prospect of a termination to the service, and trembled for the loss of the customary gratuities, at last could refrain no longer, but "*caused the organ to be struck up against him, and would not give over playing till they had blowed him down.*"

There are three great qualities which co-exist in Barrow—fertile invention, conclusive reasoning, and energetic diction. Some will study and admire him for one of these excellencies, and others for another. Some have fixed their attention so exclusively upon the logic, as to deny the rhetoric; and others have been so amazed and carried away with the fulness of the diction, that they have doubted whether such a fluent writer could be a solid reasoner. But whatever may be refused, we know of none who has withheld from Barrow the praise of clear conception and vigorous originality. His ideas are, like his own person, rather compact than colossal, full of a strenuous vitality, stamped with genius, but not finically attired. The argument seems to have been his first concern. At the outset, he fixes his eye upon his proposition, and sets forward to it with the rectileneal precision of a rigid mathematician; but in his progress he accumulates, from either side of his path, such store of fruits and flowers, that you fancy he has forgot his errand, and lost his way—when, without fatigue, and without a deviation, he lands you at the conclusion. The argument cost him labour—the subsidiary thoughts came spontaneous.

His style is often slovenly, but never feeble. He sometimes uses an expression obsolete even in his own day, or which has become vulgar in ours—but never one which does not fully convey his sense, and strengthen the sentence where it stands. His very harshness is forcible; and peculiar as is his idiom, its peculiarity is not felt as an affectation. It is the natural product of a singular mind favoured with rare advantages—a mind fresh and luxuriant

* There is much truth in the remark of Le Clerc—"Les sermons de cet Auteur sont plutot des Traitez, ou les Dissertations exactes, que de simples Harangues pour plaire a la multitude."—*Bibliotheque Universelle*, tome iii. p. 325.

in itself, and enriched from the treasures of ancient genius—exercised and strengthened in the change of many climes, and in the intercourse of many congenial souls. If there be any affectation whatever in the style of our author, it is the curious one alleged by Coleridge. "Barrow," says that subtile critic, "often debased his language merely to evidence his loyalty. It was, indeed, no easy task for a man of so much genius, and such a precise mathematical mode of thinking, to adopt, even for a moment, the slang of L'Estrange and Tom Brown; but he succeeded in doing so sometimes. With the exception of such parts, Barrow must be considered as closing the first great period of the English language. Dryden began the second."*

With a certain class of persons, one circumstance has favoured the popularity of Barrow's Sermons. The peculiar truths of the gospel are not brought into that prominence which would have made those discourses "foolishness" to many who have taste to relish their other excellences, but who for the sake of no literary excellence whatever would study a book inculcating in its simplicity and fulness the great doctrine of the New Testament. Barrow did not deny that doctrine. He occasionally vindicates it, and more frequently implies it. We trust that his own soul was resting on it. But he had not sufficient practical acquaintance with the common case of careless and half-awakened sinners to *feel*, that the only plan for preaching effectually to them, is to "shut them up unto the faith as it is in Jesus." Had he preached more frequently, and enjoyed opportunities of dealing with his hearers more closely, he would sooner have come to the determination of Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 2. As it is, he was not silent because he was ashamed. He was coming more and more to *glory* in the cross; and it is an interesting fact, that this was the subject of the sermon the preaching of which occasioned his last sickness, and in preparing which for the press he employed his dying hand. In some respects, it is the noblest specimen of sacred eloquence which has survived him; and of all that he has written, the best fitted to answer the great end of preaching—"Christ alone exalted."

LETTERS OF DR. BARROW TO MR. JOHN COLLINS.

Honoured Sir—I receive the booke of Snellius, and that of your own composition, which you were pleased to bestow upon me, and for which I thank you, though must confesse it doth somewhat surpasse my capacity, who have little acquainted my selfe with that kind of practicks, and indeed hardly with any. That little study I have employed upon mathematical busynesses, being never designed to any other use than the bare knowledge of the general reasons of things, as a scholar, and no farther; so that if you propound any thing to me, I pray please to doe it in the most general and abstract termes, as neere the geometricall style, as you can; otherwise I shall hardly understand the questions.

* Coleridge's Table-Talk, vol. ii. p. 337.

Concerning the bookes you mention, I have most of them, particularly Hugenius de Magnitudine Circuli, which I would gladly have compared with Snellius, but his Treatise de Quadraturâ Circuli, &c. I have not, but would gladly see, and have it to my selfe, if procurable; for I exceedingly esteeme his writings; and if true that he hath sett out an Algebra, I should be glad to have it, though I kenn no Dutch, and would try what I could divine out of it.

I was familiarly acquainted with Renoldinus at Florence; and he was then working upon his Algebra. We may expect a collection of what is in former writers, but whether much new I cannot tell.

What you speake concerning the Parabolicall Conoids, I doe not understand whether it is by way of inquiry or offer. If you aske me, I answer, that I thinke I have sufficient reason to pronounce, that generally the proportions between segments made by plaines parallell to the axis, or otherwise, cannot geometrically be found out; because they cutt all the circles parallell to the base in different unexplicable proportions; so that it were but vaine labour to endeavour the invention of them. However I am now employed in thoughts so different, that I cannot well compose my mind to thinke upon it. If you remember, Mersennus and Torricellius doe mention a general method of finding the tangents of curve lines by composition of motions; but doe not tell it us. Such a one I have some time found out, and did thinke to send it to you, it being only one theorem very easily and simply demonstrated; but wanting leisure to dresse it, I will attend till you call for it, if you thinke such a curiosity worth the regarding.

Trinity College, September 5, 1664.

Honoured Sir,—Were I to compute the portions of sphaere or sphaeroid, I should only use these rules out of Archimedes; $\frac{\pi}{\delta}$ or $\frac{355}{113}$; $r\,n\,n - \frac{n3}{3}$ is the portion of the sphaere (putting r for the radius, and n for the axis of the portion), and $\frac{\pi}{\delta}$: $\frac{r\,n\,n}{2}$ $\frac{-r}{3t}$ n^3 is the portion of the sphaeroid, putting r for the *latus rectum*, and t for the *transversum*, and n for the axis of the portion.

Trinity College, November 12, 1664.

Honoured Sir.—I have received, and thanke you for the Mengolus; I shall not have leisure for a while to consider him seriouly; but casting my eye upon him, I doe not wonder at Mr. Kersey's not having patience to peruse him; for I perceive he doth affect to use abundance of new definitions and uncouth terms; so that one must, as it were, learne new languages to attain to his meaning, though it may be only somewhat ordinary is couched under them. I esteeme this a great fault in any writer; for much time is spent and labour employed to less purpose than needed, since there is little in any science but may be sufficiently explained in the usual manner of speaking, as particularly Mr. Cartes his Geometry doth plainly show, where so many usefull rules are delivered without any new words or definitions at all. But I beginn to prate. However be pleased to put this booke upon my accompt seeing you can

furnish yourself with another; for I love to have by me divers bookes, which I doe not much esteeme; upon which score you need not scruple at your discretion to send me any booke, that I have not. I never matter the point of mony in this case, and I shall take any willingly and thankfully from you. Tis hard if there be not one thing at least to be learned out of any new booke; and that satisfyes me more than the expense of a few shillings can displease me.

Trinity College, Nov. 29, 1664.

Honoured Sir,—Alsted's Admiranda Mathematica is nothing but a very short comprizall of the chief mathematical sciences, containing small systemes of arithmetick, geometry, astronomy, geography, opticks, musick, architecture, according to the methodicall or Ramisticall way. It is done, I thinke well enough, according to the designe, but may well be wanted. I cannot very well describe to you Bartschius his Planisphære. It treats more or lesse concerning most parts of astronomy but mainly concerning the fixed stars and their asterisms, giving verball discriptions, catalogues with longitude and latitude, and three or four mapps or delineations of them in plano. At the end are subjoined ephemerides of the planets from the yeere 1662 to 1686, with some other astronomical tables. Whether there be any thing extraordinary in the booke, I cannot tell, for I have looked very little upon it. But if you please, I will send it you, that you may informe yourselfe. Thomae Albii, that is, in plain English, Mr. Thomas White his Chrysaspis is a very small tract pretending to the quadrature of the circle but most easily confutable, as also to prove the equality of the spiral line to the semi-circumference of the circle, to which it appertains; both which errors he hath recanted publickly. Whether Dibuadius hath commented upon the last books of Euclid, I cannot tell. Mine is only upon the first sixe.

Trinity College, March 3, 1665.

For your proposition concerning Archimedes and Apollonius, I cannot well tell what to answer. I have been offered by a friend to be at the charges of printing them for me, which would yield me, I suppose, a considerable benefit, for I thinke I could put off many here. But till I be necessitated by some engagement, I shall hardly ever induce myselfe to take the pains, and spend the time requisite for the reviewall of them; although within two or three months I thinke I could performe that. If the stationer you mention should make me a round offer, and propose faire conditions, I might perhaps be moved. Till such occasion I am likely to supersede. I have been also urged to review that little Euclid, which ten or eleven years ago I writ very hastily. I would however gladly have it in my disposall; and therefore would know whether Mr. Neeland, who printed it, his widow doe make any accompt thereof. He gott, as I have been told from himselfe, some hundreds of pounds by it; and did not keep conditions with me in printing it so well as he did promise me, so that I might presume to right myselfe; but I would

not have any controversy, nor doe the shadow of an injury to any. Wherefore, if you have opportunity of inquiry, and could informe me, whether Mr. Neeland's relict would consent, that I dispose thereof at my pleasure, you would favour me therein. Indeed if I should resolve about Archimedes or Apollonius, I should willingly have that booke goe along with them, corrected and enlarged, and polished somewhat, by reason of some short Scholiums that might be conveniently interserted as lemmatical and preparatory to their demonstrations; as also I should add Theodisius his Sphæricks, and some other elementary things. But this is spoken in way of supposition.

Trinity College, Feb. 1, 1666-7.

Deare Sir.—As for Mengolus I have been once or twice looking into him; but his language is so uncouth and ambiguous, his definitions so many and so obscure, that I thinke it were easyer toward the understanding any matter to learne Arabick than his dialect. So that, besides that I doe very much dislike such kind of writing, and hope very little from those that use it, having busynesse enough which the last yeere hath been encreased by divers gentlemen being committed to my care, I can hardly allow leisure, and indeed have not patience enough to search into the depths of his obscurityes. I see that he propounds many ordinary things involved in his way; but what he hath performed new I cannot guesse.

WORKS OF DR. ISAAC BARROW.

Seventy-seven Sermons on several occasions.

Sermons and Expositions on all the Articles of the Apostles' Creed.

A brief Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue, &c.

A Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy.

A Discourse of the Unity of the Church.

Euclidis Elementa translated into English.—Euclidis Data.—Lectiones Opticæ xviii.—Lectiones Geometricæ.—Archimedis Opera.—Apollonii Conicorum, Libri. iv.—Theodosii Sphærica.—Lectio de Sphæra et Cylindro.—Lectiones Mathematicæ.

Opuscula Theologica.

Poemata.

Orationes.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE PLEASANTNESS OF RELIGION.

PROV. iii. 17.—*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

THE meaning of these words seems plain and obvious, and to need little explication. *Her ways*, that is, the ways of Wisdom. What this Wisdom is, I shall not undertake accurately to describe. Briefly, I understand by it, an habitual skill or faculty of judging aright about matters of practice, and choosing according to that right judgment, and conforming the actions to such good choice. *Ways* and *paths* in Scripture-dialect are the courses and manners of action. For *doing* there is commonly called *walking;* and the methods of doing are the *ways* in which we walk. By *pleasantness* may be meant the joy and delight accompanying, and by *peace* the content and satisfaction ensuing such a course of actions. So that, in short, the sense of these words seems simply to be this; that a course of life directed by wisdom and good judgment is delightful in the practice, and brings content after it. The truth of which proposition it shall be my endeavour at this time to confirm by divers reasons, and illustrate by several instances.

I. Then, Wisdom of itself is delectable and satisfactory, as it implies a revelation of truth, and a detection of error to us. It is like light,* pleasant to behold, casting a sprightly lustre, and diffusing a benign influence all about; presenting a goodly prospect of things to the eyes of our mind; displaying objects in their due shapes, postures, magnitudes, and colours; quickening our spirits with a comfortable warmth, and disposing our minds to a cheerful activity; dispelling the darkness of ignorance, scattering the mists of doubt, driving away the spectres of delusive fancy; mitigating the cold of sullen melancholy; discovering obstacles, securing progress, and making the passages of life clear, open, and pleasant. We are all naturally endowed with a strong appetite to know, to see, to pursue truth; and with a bashful abhorrency from being deceived, and entangled in mistake. And as success in inquiry after truth affords matter of joy and triumph; so being conscious of error and miscarriage therein, is attended with shame and sorrow. These desires Wisdom in the most perfect manner satisfies, not by entertaining us with dry, empty, fruitless theories, upon mean and vulgar subjects; but by enriching our minds with excellent and useful knowledge, directed to the noblest objects and serviceable to the highest ends. Nor in its own nature only, but,

II. Much more in its worthy consequences is Wisdom exceedingly pleasant and peaceable: in general, by disposing us to acquire and to enjoy all the good, delight, and happiness we are capable of; and by freeing us from all the inconveniences, mischiefs, and infelicities our condition is subject to. For whatever good from clear understanding, deliberate advice, sagacious foresight, stable resolution, dexterous address, right intention, and orderly proceeding, doth naturally result, Wisdom confers: whatever evil

* Veritatis luce menti hominis nihil dulcius.—*Cic. Acad.* 2.

blind ignorance, false presumption, unwary credulity, precipitate rashness, unsteady purpose, ill contrivance, backwardness, inability, unwieldiness and confusion of thought, beget, Wisdom prevents. From a thousand snares and treacherous allurements, from innumerable rocks and dangerous surprises, from exceedingly many needless incumbrances and vexatious toils of fruitless endeavour, she redeems and secures us. More particularly,

III. Wisdom assures us we take the best course, and proceed as we ought. For by the same means we judge aright, and reflecting upon that judgment are assured we do so: as the same arguments by which we demonstrate a theorem convince us we have demonstrated it, and the same light by which we see an object makes us know we see it. And this assurance in the progress of the action exceedingly pleases, and in the sequel of it infinitely contents us. He that judges amiss, not perceiving clearly the rectitude of his process, proceeds usually with a dubious solicitude; and at length, discovering his error, condemns his own choice, and receives no other satisfaction but of repentance. Like a traveller, who, being uncertain whether he goes in the right way, wanders in continual perplexity, till he be informed, and then too late, understanding his mistake, with regret seeks to recover himself into it. But he that knows his way, and is satisfied that it is the true one, makes on merrily and carelessly, not doubting he shall in good time arrive to his designed journey's end. Two troublesome mischiefs therefore Wisdom frees us from, the company of anxious doubt in our actions, and the consequence of bitter repentance: for no man can doubt of what he is sure, nor repent of what he knows good.

IV. Wisdom begets in us a hope of success in our actions, and is usually attended therewith. Now, what is more delicious than hope? what more satisfactory than success? *That* is like the pursuit of a flying enemy, *this* like gathering the spoil; *that* like viewing the ripe corn, *this* like the joy of harvest itself. And he that aims at a good end, and knows he uses proper means to attain it, why should he despair of success, since effects naturally follow their causes, and the Divine Providence is wont to afford its concourse to such proceedings? Beside that such well-grounded hope confirms resolution, and quickens activity, which mainly conduce to the prosperous issue of designs. Farther,

V. Wisdom prevents discouragement from the possibility of ill success, yea, and makes disappointment itself tolerable. For if either the foresight of a possible miscarriage should discourage us from adventuring on action, or inculpable frustration were intolerable, we should with no heart apply ourselves to anything; there being no designs in this world, though founded upon the most sound advice, and prosecuted by the most diligent endeavour, which may not be defeated, as depending upon divers causes above our power, and circumstances beyond our prospect. The inconstant opinions, uncertain resolutions, mutable affections, and fallacious pretences of men, upon which the accomplishment of most projects rely, may easily deceive and disappoint us. The imperceptible course of nature exerting itself in sudden tempests, diseases, and unlucky casualties, may surprise us, and give an end to our businesses and lives together. However, the irresistible power of the Divine Providence, guided by the unsearchable counsel of his will, we can never be assured that it will not interpose, and hinder the effects of our endeavours. Yet notwithstanding, when we act prudently, we have no reason to be disheartened; because, having good intentions, and using fit means, and having done our best, as no deserved blame, so no considerable damage can arrive to us: and though we find Almighty God hath crossed us, yet we are sure he is not displeased with us. Which consideration, wherewith Wisdom furnishes us, will make the worst success not only tolerable, but comfortable to us. For hence we have reason to hope, that the All-wise Goodness reserves a better reward for us, and will sometime recompense not only the good purposes we unhappily pursued, but also the unexpected disappointment we patiently endured;—and that however we shall be no losers in the end. Which discourse is mainly fortified by considering how the best and wisest attempts have often miscarried. We see Moses, authorized

by God's command, directed by his counsel, and conducted by his hand, intended to bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan; yet by the unreasonable incredulity and stubborn perverseness of that people he had his purpose frustrated. The holy prophets afterward earnestly endeavoured to contain the same people within compass of obedience to the divine commands, and to reduce them from their idolatrous and wicked courses; yet without correspondent effect. Our Saviour, by the example of his holy life, continual instruction, and vehement exhortations, assayed to procure a belief of and submission to his most excellent doctrine; yet how few *believed his report*, and complied with his discipline! Yea, Almighty God himself often complains, how in a manner his designs were defeated, his desires thwarted, his offers refused, his counsels rejected, his expectations deceived. *Wherefore*, (saith he concerning his vineyard), *when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*[a] And again, *I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people.*[b] And again, *I have even sent unto you all my prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them: yet they harkened not unto me.*[c] Wherefore there is no good cause we should be disheartened, or vexed, when success is wanting to well-advised purposes. It is foolish and ill-grounded intentions, and practices unwarrantable by good reason, that makes the undertakers solicitous of success, and being defeated, leave them disconsolate. Yea farther,

VI. Wisdom makes all the troubles, griefs, and pains incident to life, whether casual adversities, or natural afflictions, easy and supportable; by rightly valuing the importance, and moderating the influence of them. It suffers not busy fancy to alter the nature, amplify the degree, or extend the duration of them, by representing them more sad, heavy, and remediless than they truly are. It allows them no force beyond what naturally and necessarily they have, nor contributes nourishment to their increase. It keeps them at a due distance, not permitting them to encroach upon the soul, or to propagate their influence beyond their proper sphere. It will not let external mischances, as poverty and disgrace, to produce an inward sense which is beyond their natural efficacy: nor corporeal affections of sickness and pain to disturb the mind, with which they have nothing to do. The region of these malignant distempers being at most but the habit of the body, wisdom by effectual antidotes repels them from the heart, and inward parts of the soul. If anything, sin, and our unworthy miscarriages toward God, should vex and discompose us: yet this trouble, Wisdom, by representing the divine goodness, and his tender mercies in our ever-blessed Redeemer, doth perfectly allay. And as for all other adversities, it abates their noxious power, by showing us they are either merely imaginary, or very short and temporary; that they admit of remedy, or at most do not exclude comfort, not wholly hindering the operations of the mind, nor extinguishing its joys; that they may have a profitable use, and pleasant end; and, however, neither imply bad conscience, nor induce obligation to punishment. For,

VII. Wisdom hath always a good conscience attending it, that purest delight and richest cordial of the soul; that brazen wall, and impregnable fortress against both external assaults, and internal commotions; that *continual feast*, whereon the mind, destitute of all other repast, with a never languishing appetite, may entertain itself; that faithful witness, and impartial judge, whoever accuses, always acquitting the innocent soul; that certain friend, in no strait failing, in no adversity deserting; that sure refuge in all storms of fortune, and persecutions of disgrace; which, as Solomon here notes, renders a man's *sleep sweet*, and undisturbed with fearful phantasms, his heart light, and his steps secure; and, if anything, can make the stoical paradox good, and cause the wise man to smile in extremity of torment; arming his mind with an invincible courage, and infusing a due confidence into it, whereby he bears up cheerfully against malicious reproach, undauntedly sustains adversity, and triumphs over bad fortune. And this invaluable treasure the wise man is only capable of possessing; who certainly knows, and heartily approves the grounds upon which he proceeds; whereas the fool, building his choice upon blind chance, or violent

[a] Isa. v. 4. [b] Isa. lxv. 2. [c] Jer. vii. 25, 26.

passion, or giddy fancy, or uncertain example, not upon the steady warrant of good reason, cannot avoid being perplexed with suspicion of mistake, and so necessarily is deprived of the comfort of a good conscience.

VIII. Wisdom confers a facility, expert readiness, and dexterity in action; which is a very pleasant and commodious quality, and exceedingly sweetens activity. To do things with difficulty, struggling, and immoderate contention, disheartens a man, quells his courage, blunts the edge of his resolution, renders him sluggish and averse from business, though apprehended never so necessary, and of great moment. These obstructions wisdom removes, facilitating operations by directing the intention to ends possible and attainable, by suggesting fit means and instruments to work by, by contriving right methods and courses of process; the mind by it being stored with variety of good principles, sure rules, and happy expedients, reposed in the memory, and ready upon all occasions to be produced, and employed in practice.

IX. Wisdom begets a sound, healthful, and harmonious complexion of the soul, disposing us with judgment to distinguish, and with pleasure to relish savoury and wholesome things, but to nauseate and reject such as are ingrateful and noxious to us; thereby capacifying us to enjoy pleasantly and innocently all those good things the divine Goodness hath provided for and consigned to us; whence to the soul proceeds all that comfort, joy, and vigour, which results to the body from a good constitution and perfect health.

X. Wisdom acquaints us with ourselves, our own temper and constitution, our propensions and passions, our habitudes and capacities; a thing not only of mighty advantage, but of infinite pleasure and content to us. No man in the world less knows a fool than himself; nay, he is more than ignorant, for he constantly errs in the point, taking himself for, and demeaning himself as toward another, a better, a wiser, and abler man than he is. He hath wonderful conceits of his own qualities and faculties; he affects commendations incompetent to him; he soars at employment surpassing his ability to manage. No comedy can represent a mistake more odd and ridiculous than his: for he wanders, and stares, and hunts after, but never can find nor discern himself; but always encounters with a false shadow instead thereof, which he passionately hugs and admires. But a wise man, by constant observation, and impartial reflection upon himself, grows very familiar with himself: he perceives his own inclinations, which, if bad, he strives to alter and correct; if good, he cherishes and corroborates them: he apprehends the matters he is fitting for, and capable to manage, neither too mean and unworthy of him, nor too high and difficult for him; and those applying his care to, he transacts easily, cheerfully, and successfully. So being neither puffed up with vain and overweening opinion, nor dejected with heartless diffidence of himself; neither admiring, nor despising; neither irksomely hating, nor fondly loving himself; he continues in good humour, maintains a sure friendship and fair correspondence with himself, and rejoices in the retirement and private conversation with his own thoughts: whence flows a pleasure and satisfaction unexpressible.

XI. Wisdom procures and preserves a constant favour and fair respect of men, purchases a good name, and upholds reputation in the world: which things are naturally desirable, commodious for life, encouragements to good, and preventive of many inconveniences. The composed frame of mind, uniform and comely demeanour, compliant and innoffensive conversation, fair and punctual dealing, considerate motions, and dexterous addresses of wise men, naturally beget esteem and affection in those that observe them. Neither than these things is there anything more commendable to human regard. As symmetry and harmony to the animal senses, so delectable is an even temper of soul and orderly tenour of actions to rational apprehensions. Folly is freakish and humorous, impertinent and obstreperous, inconstant and inconsistent, peevish and exceptious; and consequently fastidious to society, and productive of aversation and disrespect. But the wise man is stable in his ways, consonant to himself, suiting his actions to his words, and those to his principles, and all to the rule of right reason; so that you may know where to find him, and

how to deal with him, and may easily please him, which makes his acquaintance acceptable, and his person valuable: beside that real worth of itself commands respect, and extorts veneration from men, and usually prosperity waits upon his well advised attempts, which exceedingly adorn and advance the credit of the undertaker: however, if he fail sometime, his usual deportment salves his repute, and easily makes it credible it was no fault of his, but of his fortune. If a fool prosper, the honour is attributed to propitious chance; if he miscarry, to his own ill management: but the entire glory of happy undertakings crowns the head of Wisdom; while the disgrace of unlucky events falls otherwhere. His light, like that of the sun, cannot totally be eclipsed; it may be dimmed, but never extinguished, and always maintains a day, though overclouded with misfortune. Who less esteems the famous African captain for being overthrown in that last fatal battle, wherein he is said to have shown the best skill, and yet endured the worst of success? Who contemns Cato, and other the grave citizens of Rome, for embracing the just, but improsperous cause of the commonwealth? A wise man's circumstances may vary and fluctuate like the floods about a rock; but he persists unmoveably the same, and his reputation unshaken: for he can always render a good account of his actions, and by reasonable apology elude the assaults of reproach.

XII. Wisdom instructs us to examine, compare, and rightly to value the objects that court our affections, and challenge our care; and thereby regulates our passions, and moderates our endeavours, which begets a pleasant serenity and peaceable tranquillity of mind. For when, being deluded with false shows, and relying upon ill-grounded presumptions, we highly esteem, passionately affect, and eagerly pursue things of little worth in themselves, or concernment to us, as we unhandsomely prostitute our affections, and prodigally miss-spend our time, and vainly loose our labour; so the event not answering our expectation, our minds thereby are confounded, disturbed, and distempered. But when, guided by right reason, we conceive great esteem of, and zealously are enamoured with, and vigorously strive to attain things of excellent worth, and weighty consequence; the conscience of having well placed our affections, and well employed our pains, and the experience of fruits corresponding to our hopes, ravishes our mind with unexpressible content. And so it is: present appearance and vulgar conceit ordinarily impose upon our fancies, disguising things with a deceitful varnish, and representing those that are vainest with the greatest advantage; whilst the noblest objects, being of a more subtle and spiritual nature, like fairest jewels enclosed in a homely box, avoid the notice of gross sense, and pass undiscerned by us. But the light of Wisdom, as it unmasks specious imposture, and bereaves it of its false colours; so it penetrates into the retirements of true excellency, and reveals its genuine lustre. For example, corporeal pleasure, which so powerfully allures and enchants us, Wisdom declares that it is but a present, momentary, and transient satisfaction of brutish sense, dimming the light, sullying the beauty, impairing the vigour, and restraining the activity of the mind; diverting from better operations, and indisposing it to enjoy purer delights; leaving no comfortable relish or gladsome memory behind it, but often followed with bitterness, regret, and disgrace. That the profit the world so greedily gapes after is but a possession of trifles, not valuable in themselves, nor rendering the masters of them so; accidentally obtained, and promiscuously enjoyed by all sorts, but commonly by the worst of men; difficultly acquired, and easily lost; however, to be used but for a very short time, and then to be resigned into uncertain hands. That the honour men so dote upon is ordinarily but the difference of a few petty circumstances, a peculiar name or title, a determinate place, a distinguishing ensign; things of only imaginary excellence, derived from chance, and conferring no advantage, except from some little influence they have upon the arbitrary opinion and fickle humour of the people; complacence in which is vain, and reliance upon it dangerous. That power and dominion, which men so impatiently struggle for, are but necessary evils introduced to restrain the bad tempers of men; most evil to them that en-

joy them; requiring tedious attendance, distracting care, and vexatious toil; attended with frequent disappointment, opprobrious censure, and dangerous envy; having such real burdens, and slavish encumbrances, sweetened only by superficial pomps, strained obsequiousness, some petty privileges and exemptions scarce worth the mentioning. That wit and parts, of which men make such ostentation, are but natural endowments, commendable only in order to use, apt to engender pride and vanity, and hugely dangerous if abused or misemployed. What should I mention beauty, that fading toy; or bodily strength and activity, qualities so palpably inconsiderable? Upon these, and such like flattering objects, so adored by vulgar opinion, wisdom exercising severe and impartial judgment, and perceiving in them no intrinsic excellence, no solid content springing from them, no perfection thence accruing to the mind, no high reward allotted to them, no security to the future condition, or other durable advantages proceeding from them; it concludes they deserve not any high opinion of the mind, nor any vehement passion of the soul, nor any laborious care to be employed on them, and moderates our affections toward them: it frees us from anxious desire of them; from being transported with excessive joy in the acquisition of them; from being overwhelmed with disconsolate sorrow at the missing of them, or parting with them; from repining and envying at those who have better success than ourselves in the procuring them; from immoderate toil in getting, and care in preserving them: and so delivering us from all these unquiet anxieties of thought, tumultuous perturbations of passion, and tedious vexations of body, it maintains our minds in a cheerful calm, quiet indifferency, and comfortable liberty. On the other side, things of real worth and high concernment, that produce great satisfaction to the mind, and are mainly conducible to our happiness, such as are a right understanding and strong sense of our obligations to Almighty God, and relations to men, a sound temper and complexion of mind, a virtuous disposition, a capacity to discharge the duties of our places, a due qualification to enjoy the happiness of the other world; these and such like things, by discovering their nature, and the effects resulting from them, it engages us highly to esteem, ardently to affect, and industriously to pursue; so preventing the inconveniences that follow the want of them, and conveying the benefits arising from the possession of them.

XIII. Wisdom distinguishes the circumstances, limits the measures, determines the modes, appoints the fit seasons of action; so preserving decorum and order, the parent of peace, and preventing confusion, the mother of iniquity, strife, and disquiet. It is in the business of human life as in a building; a due proportion of bigness, a fit situation of place, a correspondency of shape, and suitableness of colour, is to be observed between the parts thereof: a defect in any of which requisites, though the materials hap to be choice and excellent, makes the whole fabric deformed and ugly to judicious apprehension. The best actions, if they swell, and exceed their due measure, if they be unskilfully misplaced, if in uncouth manner performed, they lose their quality, and turn both to the disgrace and disadvantage of life. It is commendable to pray; but they that would always be performing that duty, by their absurd devotion procured to themselves the title of heretics: and they that will stand praying in places of public concourse, deserved our Saviour's reprehensions; and those men who, against the custom and ordinary use, would needs pray with their faces covered, you know St. Paul insinuates of them, that they were fond and contentious persons. Friendly admonition is very laudable, and of rare use; but being upon all occasions immoderately used, or in public society so as to encroach upon modesty, or endamage reputation; or when the person admonished is otherwise employed, and attent upon his business; or being delivered in an imperiously insulting way, or in harsh and opprobrious language; it becomes unsavoury and odious, and both in show and effect resembles a froward, malicious exceptiousness. It were infinite to compute in how many instances want of due order, measure, and manner, do spoil and incommodate action. It is wisdom that applies remedy to these mischiefs. Things must be compared to, and arbitrated by, her standard, or else they will

contain something of monstrous enormity; either strutting in unwieldly bulk, or sinking in defective scantness. If she do not fashion and model circumstances, they will sit ugly on the things that wear them; if she do not temper the colours, and describe the lineaments, the draught of practice will be but rude and imperfect, and little resemble the true patterns of duty: but if she interpose, and perform her part, all things will appear conformable, neat, and delicate.

XIV. Wisdom discovers our relations, duties, and concernments, in respect of men, with the natural grounds of them; thereby both qualifying and inclining us to the discharge of them: whence exceeding convenience, pleasure, and content ensues. By it we understand we are parts and members of the great body, the universe; and are therefore concerned in the good management of it, and are thereby obliged to procure its order and peace, and by no irregular undertaking to disturb or discompose it; which makes us honest and peaceable men: that we proceed from the same primitive stock, are children of the same father, and partake of the same blood with all men; are endowed with like faculties of mind, passions of soul, shape of body, and sense of things: that we have equally implanted in our original constitution, inclinations to love, pity, gratitude, sociableness, quiet, joy, reputation: that we have an indispensable need and impatient desire of company, assistance, comfort, and relief; that therefore it is according to the design of nature, and agreeable to reason, that to those, to whom our natural condition by so many bands of cognation, similitude, and mutual necessitude, hath knit and conjoined us, we should bear a kind respect and tender affection; should cheerfully concur in undergoing the common burdens; should heartily wish and industriously promote their good, assist them in accomplishing their reasonable desires, thankfully requite the courtesies received from them, congratulate and rejoice with them in their prosperity, comfort them in their distresses, and, as we are able, relieve them; however, tenderly compassionate their disappointments, miseries, and sorrows. This renders us kind and courteous neighbours, sweet and grateful companions. It represents unto us the dreadful effects and insupportable mischiefs arising from breach of faith, contravening the obligations of solemn pacts, infringing public laws, deviating from the received rules of equity, violating promises, and interrupting good correspondence among men; by which considerations it engages us to be good citizens, obedient subjects, just dealers, and faithful friends. It minds us of the blindness, impotence, and levity, the proneness to mistake, and misbehaviour that human nature necessarily is subject to; deserving rather our commiseration, than anger or hatred; which prompts us to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to be gentle in censure, to be insensible of petty affronts, to pardon injuries, to be patient, exorable, and reconcilable to those that give us greatest cause of offence. It teaches us, the good may, but the evil of our neighbour can in no wise advantage us; that from the suffering of any man, simply considered, no benefit can accrue, nor natural satisfaction arise to us; and that therefore it is a vain, base, brutish, and unreasonable thing, for any cause whatsoever, to desire or delight in the grief, pain, or misery of our neighbour, to hate or envy him, or insult over him, or devise mischief to him, or prosecute revenge upon him; which makes us civil, noble, and placable enemies, or rather no enemies at all. So that Wisdom is in effect the genuine parent of all moral and political virtue, justice, and honesty; as Solomon says in her person, *I lead in the way of righteousness*, and *in the midst of the paths of judgment*.[d] And how sweet these are in the practice, how comfortable in the consequences, the testimony of continual experience, and the unanimous consent of all wise men sufficiently declare. But farther,

XV. The principal advantage of Wisdom is, its acquainting us with the nature and reason of true religion, and affording convictive arguments to persuade to the practice of it; which is accompanied with the purest delight, and attended with the most solid content imaginable. I say, the nature of religion, wherein it consists, and what it requires; the mistake of which produceth daily so many mischiefs and inconveniences in the world,

[d] Prov. viii. 20.

and exposes so good a name to so much reproach. It showeth it consisteth not in fair professions and glorious pretences, but in real practice; not in a pertinacious adherence to any sect or party, but in a sincere love of goodness, and dislike of naughtiness, wherever discovering itself; not in vain ostentations and flourishes of outward performance, but in an inward good complexion of mind, exerting itself in works of true devotion and charity; not in a nice orthodoxy, or politic subjection of our judgments to the peremptory dictates of men, but in a sincere love of truth, in a hearty approbation of, and compliance with, the doctrines fundamentally good, and necessary to be believed; not in harsh censuring and virulently inveighing against others, but in careful amending our own ways; not in a peevish crossness and obstinate repugnancy to received laws and customs, but in a quiet and peaceable submission to the express laws of God, and lawful commands of man: not in a furious zeal for or against trivial circumstances, but in a conscionable practising the substantial parts of religion; not in a frequent talking or contentious disputing about it, but in a ready observance of the unquestionable rules and prescripts of it: in a word, that religion consists in nothing else but doing what becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or similitude to his nature, and in a willing obedience to his holy will: to which by potent incentives it allures and persuades us; by representing to us his transcendently glorious attributes, conspicuously displayed in the frame, order, and government of the world: that wonderful Power, which erected this great and goodly fabric; that incomprehensible Wisdom, which preserves it in a constant harmony; that immense Goodness, which hath so carefully provided for the various necessities, delights, and comforts of its innumerable inhabitants. I say, by representing those infinitely glorious perfections, it engages us with highest respect to esteem, reverence, and honour him. Also, by minding us of our manifold obligations to him, our receiving being, life, reason, sense, all the faculties, powers, excellencies, privileges, and commodities of our natures from him; of his tender care and loving providence continually supporting and protecting us; of his liberal beneficence, patient indulgence, and earnest desire of our good and happiness, by manifold expressions evidently manifested toward us; it inflames us with ardent love, and obliges us to officious gratitude toward him. Also, by declaring the necessary and irreconcilable contrariety of his nature to all impurity and perverseness, his peerless majesty, his irresistible power, and his all-seeing knowledge, it begets an awful dread and a devout fear of him. By discovering him, from his infinite benignity, willing, and from his unlimited power, only able to supply our needs, relieve us in distresses, protect us from dangers, and confer any valuable benefit upon us, it engenders faith, and encourages us to rely upon him. By revealing to us his super-eminent sovereignty, uncontrolable dominion, and unquestionable authority over us; together with the admirable excellency, wisdom, and equity of his laws, so just and reasonable in themselves, so suitable to our nature, so conducible to our good, so easy and practicable, so sweet and comfortable; it powerfully inclines, and by a gentle force, as it were, constrains us to obedience. By such efficacious inducements, Wisdom urges us to all duties of religion, and withal surely directs us (as I before said) wherein it consists; teaching us to have right and worthy apprehensions of the divine nature, to which our devotion, if true and good, must be suited and conformed: and so it frees us, as from irreligion and profane neglect of God, so from fond superstitions, the sources of so much evil to mankind. For he that wisely hath considered the Wisdom, goodness, and power of God, cannot imagine God can with a regardless eye overlook his presumptuous contempts of his laws, or endure him to proceed in an outrageous defiance of Heaven, to continue hurting himself, or injuring his neighbour; nor can admit unreasonable terrors, or entertain suspicious conceits of God, as of an imperious master, or implacable tyrant over him, exacting impossible performances from, or delighting in the fatal miseries of his creatures; nor can suppose him pleased with hypocritical shows, and greatly taken with superficial courtships of ceremonious address; or that he can in anywise favour our fiery zeals,

fierce passions, or unjust partialities about matter of opinion and ceremony; or can do otherwise than detest all factious, harsh, uncharitable, and revengeful proceedings, of what nature, or upon what ground soever; or that he can be so inconsistent with himself, as to approve anything but what is like himself, that is, righteousness, sincerity, and beneficence.

Lastly, Wisdom attracts the favor of God, purchaseth a glorious reward, and secureth perpetual felicity to us. *For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.* And, *Glorious is the fruit of good labours; and the root of wisdom shall never fall away.*[e] And, *Happy, is the man that findeth wisdom;* And, *Whoso findeth* her, *findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.*[f] These are the words of wise Solomon, in the book of Wisdom, and in the Proverbs. God loveth her, as most agreeable to his nature; as resembling him; as an offspring, beam, and efflux of that Wisdom which founded the earth, and established the heavens; as that which begetteth honour, love, and obedience to his commands, and truly glorifies him; and as that which promotes the good of his creatures, which he earnestly desires. And the paths she leads in are such as directly tend to the promised inheritance of joy and bliss.

Thus have I simply and plainly presented you with part of what my meditation suggested upon this subject: it remains that we endeavour to obtain this excellent endowment of soul, by the faithful exercise of our reason, careful observation of things, diligent study of the divine law, watchful reflection upon ourselves, virtuous and religious practice; but especially, by imploring the divine influence, the original spring of light, and fountain of all true knowledge, following St. James's advice: *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth freely.* Therefore, O everlasting Wisdom, the Maker, Redeemer, and Governor of all things, let some comfortable beams from thy great body of heavenly light descend upon us, to illuminate our dark minds, and quicken our dead hearts; to inflame us with ardent love unto thee, and to direct our steps in obedience to thy laws, through the gloomy shades of this world, into that region of eternal light and bliss, where thou reignest in perfect glory and majesty, one God ever blessed, world without end. Amen.

[e] Wis. vii. 28; iii. 15. [f] Prov. iii. 13; viii. 35.

SERMON II.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 Tim. iv. 8.—*but godliness is profitable for all things.*

How generally men, with most unanimous consent, are devoted to profit, as to the immediate scope of their designs and aim of their doings, if with the slightest attention we view what is acted upon this theatre of human affairs, we cannot but discern. All that we see men so very serious and industrious about, which we call business; that which they trudge for in the streets, which they work or wait for in the shops, which they meet and crowd for at the exchange, which they sue for in the hall, and solicit for at the court, which they plough and dig for, which they march and fight for in the field, which they travel for at land, and sail for (among rocks and storms) upon the sea, which they plod for in the closet, and dispute for in the schools* (yea, may we not add, which they frequently pray for and preach for in the church?) what is it but profit?[a] Is it not this apparently, for which men so eagerly contest and quarrel, so bitterly envy and emulate, so fiercely clamour and inveigh, so cunningly supplant and undermine one another; which stuffeth their hearts with mutual hatred and spite, which tippeth their tongues with slander and reproach, which often embrueth their hands with blood and slaughter; for which they expose their lives and limbs to danger, for which they undergo grievous toils and drudgeries, for which they distract their mind with cares, and *pierce their heart with sorrows;* to which they sacrifice their present ease and content; yea, to which commonly they prostitute their honour and conscience? This, if you mark it, is the great mistress, which is with so passionate rivality every where wooed and courted; this is the common mark, which all eyes aim, and all endeavours strike at; this the hire which men de-

* Φεῦ, δῦ' ὀβολὼ ὡσ μέγα δύνασθον παντα χοῦ—Aristoph. Plut.

[a] Prov. xiv. 23.

mand for all their pains, the prize they hope for all their combats, the harvest they seek from all the year's assiduous labour. This is the bait, by which you may inveigle most men any whither; and the most certain sign, by which you may prognosticate what any man will do: for mark where his profit is, there will he be. This some professedly and with open face, others slyly and under thin veils of pretence; (under guise of friendship, of love to public good, of loyalty, of religious zeal); some directly and in a plain track, others obliquely and by subtile trains; some by sordid and base means, others in ways more cleanly and plausible; some gravely and modestly, others wildly and furiously; all (very few excepted) in one manner or another, do clearly in most of their proceedings level and drive at.*

This practice, then, being so general, and seeing that men are reasonable creatures, that it is so cannot surely proceed from mere brutishness, or dotage; there must be some fair colour or semblance of reason, which draweth men into, and carrieth them forward in this way. The reason indeed is obvious and evident enough; the very name of profit implieth it, signifying that which is useful, or conducible to purposes really or seemingly good. The gain of money, or of somewhat equivalent thereto, is therefore specially termed profit, because it readily supplieth necessity, furnisheth convenience, feedeth pleasure, satisfieth fancy and curiosity, promoteth ease and liberty, supporteth honour and dignity, procureth power, dependencies, and friendships, rendereth a man somebody considerable in the world; in fine, enableth to do good, or to perform works of beneficence and charity. Profit is therefore so much affected and pursued, because it is, or doth seem, apt to procure or promote some good desirable to us.

If, therefore, a project should be proposed to us, very feasible and probable to succeed, in pursuance whereof assuredly we might obtain great profit; methinks, in consistence with ourselves, and conformably to our usual manner of acting, we should be very ready to embrace and execute it. Such a project it is, which, in my text, by a very trusty voucher and skilful judge of such things, and one who had himself fully experimented it, is proposed; which in itself is very practicable, so that any of us may, if we have a mind to it, and will be at the pains, throughly compass and carry it on: which will exceedingly turn to account, and bring in gains unto us unspeakably vast; in comparison whereto all other designs, which men with so much care and toil do pursue, are very unprofitable or detrimental, yielding but shadows of profit, or bringing real damage to us.

It is briefly this, to be religious or pious; that is, in our minds steadfastly to believe on God (such as nature in some measure, and revelation more clearly, declareth him); in our hearts earnestly to love and reverence him, through all our practice sincerely and diligently to observe his laws. This is it which St. Paul affirmeth to be *profitable for all things*, and which it is my intent, by God's help, to recommend unto you as such; demonstrating it really to be so, by representing some of those numberless benefits and advantages which accrue from it, extending to all conditions and capacities of men, to all states, all seasons, and in effect to all affairs of life.

It hath been ever a main obstruction to the practice of piety, that it hath been taken for no friend, or rather for an enemy, to profit; as both unprofitable and prejudicial to its followers: and many semblances there are countenancing that opinion. For religion seemeth to smother or to slacken the industry and alacrity of men in following profit, many ways: by charging them to be content with a little, and careful for nothing; by diverting their affections and cares from worldly affairs to matters of another nature, place, and time; prescribing in the first place to seek things spiritual, heavenly, and future; by disparaging all secular wealth, as a thing, in comparison to virtue and spiritual goods, very mean and inconsiderable; by checking greedy desires and aspiring thoughts after it; by debarring the most ready ways of getting it (violence, exaction, fraud, and flattery); yea, straitening the best ways, eager care, and

* Prima fere vota, et cunctis notissima templis,
Divitiæ ut crescant, &c. *Juv. Sat.* x.
Omnes ad affectum atque appetitum utilitatis suæ naturæ ipsius magisterio atque impulsione ducuntur.—*Salv. ad Eccl. Cath.* 2.

diligence; by commending strict justice in all cases, and always taking part with conscience when it clasheth with interest; by paring away the largest uses of wealth, in the prohibition of its free enjoyment to pride or pleasure; by enjoining liberal communication thereof in ways of charity and mercy; by engaging men to expose their goods sometimes to imminent hazard, sometimes to certain loss; obliging them to forsake all things, and to embrace poverty for its sake.

It favoureth this conceit, to observe, that often bad men by impious courses do appear to thrive and prosper; while good men seem for their goodness to suffer, or to be no wise visibly better for it, enduring much hardship and distress.

It furthereth the prejudice, that some persons, void of true piety, or imperfectly good, (some *dabblers* in religion), do not, from their lame, slight, and superficial performances, feel satisfactory returns, such as they did presume to find; and thence, to the defamation of piety, are apt to say, with those men in the prophet, *It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?*[b] Yea, that sometimes very pious men, being out of humour, and somewhat discomposed by the urgent pressures of affliction, the disappointments and crosses incident to all men here in this region of trouble, are apt to complain and express themselves dissatisfied, saying with Job, *It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God. What advantage will it be unto me, and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*[c] or with David, *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency: for all the day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.*[d]

To these considerations, disadvantageous in this respect to piety, may be added, that the constant and certain profits emerging from it (although incomparably more substantial, and to the mind more sensible than any other) are not yet so gross and palpable, that men, who from being immersed in earth and flesh are blind in error, dull of apprehension, vain and inconsiderate in their judgments, tainted and vitiated in their palates, can discern their worth, or relish their sweetness. Hence it is that so many follow the judgment and practice of those in Job, *who say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?*[e]

For voiding which prejudices, and the recommendation of St. Paul's project, I shall, as I said, propose some of those innumerable advantages, by considering which the immense profitableness of piety will appear. And first, I shall mention those considerations which more plainly do import universality; then shall touch some benefits thereof, seeming more particular, yet in effect vastly large, and of a very diffusive influence.

I. First, then, we may consider, that piety is exceeding useful for all sorts of men, in all capacities, all states, all relations; fitting and disposing them to manage all their respective concernments, to discharge all their peculiar duties, in a proper, just, and decent manner.

It rendereth all superiors equal and moderate in their administrations; mild, courteous, and affable in their converse; benign and condescensive in all their demeanour toward their inferiors.[f]

Correspondently it disposeth inferiors to be sincere and faithful, modest, loving, respectful, diligent, apt willingly to yield due subjection and service.[g]

It inclineth princes to be just, gentle, benign, careful for their subjects' good, apt to administer justice uprightly, to protect right, to encourage virtue, to check wickedness.[h]

Answerably it rendereth subjects loyal, submissive, obedient, quiet, and peaceable, ready to yield due honour, to pay the tributes and bear the burdens imposed, to discharge all duties, and observe all laws prescribed by their governors, conscionably, patiently, cheerfully, without reluctancy, grudging, or murmuring.[i]

It maketh parents loving, gentle, provident for their children's good education,

[b] Mal. iii. 14. [c] Job xxxiv. 9; xxxv. 3.
[d] Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14.

[e] Job xxi. 14, 15. [f] Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1.
[g] Eph. vi. 5. [h] Col. iii. 22; 1 Pet. ii. 18.
[i] Rom. xiii. 1; Tit. iii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 9; Phil. ii. 14.

and comfortable subsistence; children, again, dutiful, respectful, grateful, apt to requite their parents.[k]

Husbands from it become affectionate and compliant to their wives; wives submissive and obedient to their husbands.[l]

It disposeth friends to be friends indeed, full of cordial affection and good-will, entirely faithful, firmly constant, industriously careful, and active in performing all good offices mutually.

It engageth men to be diligent in their calling, faithful to their trust, contented and peaceable in their station, and thereby serviceable to public good.

It rendereth all men just and punctual in their dealing, orderly and quiet in their behaviour, courteous and complaisant in their conversation, friendly and charitable upon all occasions, apt to assist, to relieve, to comfort one another.[m]

It tieth all relations more fastly and strongly, assureth and augmenteth all endearments, enforceth and establisheth all obligations by the firm bands of conscience; set aside which, no engagement can hold sure against temptations of interest or pleasure. Much difference there is between performing these duties out of natural temper, fear of punishment, hope of temporal reward, selfish design, regard to credit, or other the like principles, and the discharging them out of religious conscience: this alone will keep men tight, uniform, resolute, and stable; whereas all other principles are loose and slippery, will soon be shaken and falter.

In consequence, to those practices springing from it, piety removeth oppression, violence, faction, disorders, and murmurings, out of the state; schisms and scandals out of the church; pride and hautiness, sloth and luxury, detraction and sycophantry, out of the court; corruption and partiality out of judicatures; clamours and tumults out of the street; brawlings, grudges, and jealousies, out of families; extortion and cozenage out of trade; strifes, emulations, slanderous backbitings, bitter and foul language, out of conversation: in all places, in all societies, it produceth, it advanceth, it establisheth, order, peace, safety, prosperity, all that is good, all that is lovely or handsome, all that is convenient or pleasant for human society and common life. It is that which, as the Wise Man saith, *exalteth a nation;* it is that which *establisheth a throne.*[n]

It is indeed the best prop and guard that can be of government, and of the commonweal: for it settleth the body politic in a sound constitution of health; it firmly cementeth the parts thereof; it putteth all things into a right order and steady course. It procureth mutual respect and affection between governors and subjects, whence ariseth safety, ease, and pleasure to both. It rendereth men truly good (that is, just and honest, sober and considerate, modest and peaceable,) and thence apt, without any constraint or stir, to yield every one their due; not affected to needless change, not disposed to raise any disturbance. It putteth men in good humour, and keepeth them in it; whence things pass smoothly and pleasantly. It cherisheth worth, and encourageth industry; whence virtue flourisheth, and wealth is increased; whence the occasions and means of disorder are stopped, the pretences for sedition and faction are cut off. In fine, it certainly procureth the benediction of God, the source of all welfare and prosperity; whence, *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth;* and, *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice,*[o] saith the great politician Solomon.

It is therefore the concernment of all men, who, as the Psalmist speaketh, *desire to live well, and would fain see good days:*[p] it is the special interest of great persons, (of the magistracy, the nobility, the gentry, of all persons that have any considerable interest in the world) who would safely and sweetly enjoy their dignity, power, or wealth, by all means to protect and promote piety, as the best instrument of their security, and undisturbedly enjoying the accommodations of their state. 'Tis in all respects their best wisdom and policy; that which will as well preserve their outward state here, as satis-

[k] Eph. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21; 1 Tim. v. 8; Eph. vi. 1; Col. iii. 20.

[l] Eph. v. 25; Col. iii. 19; 1 Pet. iii. 7; Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18; Tit. ii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 5.

[m] Gal. vi. 2. 10; Phil. iv. 8; 1 Thes. iii. 12; 2 Cor. ix. 13.

[n] Prov. xiv. 34; xvi. 12; xx. 28: xxix. 14; viii. 15; xxix. 8.

[o] Prov. xi. 10; xxix. 2.

[p] Psal. xxxiv. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 10.

fy their consciences within, and save their souls hereafter. All the Machiavelian arts and tricks, all the sleights and fetches of worldly craft, do signify nothing in comparison to this one plain and easy way of securing and furthering their interests.

If, then, it be a gross absurdity to desire the fruits, and not to take care of the root, not to cultivate the stock, whence they sprout; if every prince gladly would have his subjects loyal and obedient, every master would have his servants honest, diligent, and observant, every parent would have his children officious and grateful, every man would have his friend faithful and kind, every one would have those just and sincere, with whom he doth negociate or converse; if any one would choose to be related to such, and would esteem their relation a happiness; then consequently should every man in reason strive to further piety, from whence alone those good dispositions and practices do proceed.

II. Piety doth fit a man for all conditions, qualifying him to pass through them all with the best advantage, wisely, cheerfully, and safely; so as to incur no considerable harm or detriment by them.

Is a man prosperous, high, or wealthy in condition? Piety guardeth him from all the mischiefs incident to that state, and disposeth him to enjoy the best advantages thereof. It keepeth him from being swelled and puffed up with vain conceit, from being transported with fond complacence or confidence therein; minding him, that it is purely the gift of God; that it absolutely dependeth on his disposal, so that it may soon be taken from him; and that he cannot otherwise than by humility, by gratitude, by the good use of it, be secure to retain it; minding him also, that he shall assuredly be forced to render a strict account concerning the good management thereof. It preserveth him from being perverted or corrupted with the temptations to which that condition is most liable; from luxury, from sloth, from stupidity, from forgetfulness of God, and of himself; maintaining among the floods of plenty a sober and steady mind. It fenceth him from insolence, and fastuous contempt of others; rendereth him civil, condescensive, kind, and helpful to those who are in a meaner state. It instructeth and inciteth him to apply his wealth and power to the best uses, to the service of God, to the benefit of his neighbour, for his own best reputation, and most solid comfort. It is the right ballast of prosperity, the only antidote for all the inconveniences of wealth; that which secureth, sweeteneth, and sanctifieth all other goods: without it, all apparent goods are very noxious, or extremely dangerous; riches, power, honour, ease, pleasure, are so many poisons, or so many snares, without it. Again, is a man poor and low in the world? Piety doth improve and sweeten even that state: it keepeth his spirits up above dejection, desperation; and disconsolateness; it freeth him from all grievous solicitude and anxiety; showing him, that although he seemeth to have little, yet he may be assured to want nothing, he having a certain succour and never-failing supply from God's good providence; that, notwithstanding the present straitness of his condition, or scantness of outward things, he hath a title to goods infinitely more precious and more considerable. A pious man cannot but apprehend himself like the child of a most wealthy, kind, and careful father, who, although he hath yet nothing in his own possession, or passing under his name, yet is assured that he can never come into any want of what is needful to him: the Lord of all things (who hath all things in heaven and earth at his disposal, who is infinitely tender of his children's good, who doth incessantly watch over them) being his gracious Father, how can he fear to be left destitute, or not to be competently provided for, as is truly best for him?

This is the difference between a pious and an impious man. Is the pious man in need? he hath then an invisible refuge to fly to, an invisible store to furnish him; he hath somewhat beyond all present things to hope in, to comfort himself with: whereas the impious person hath nothing beside present appearances to support or solace himself by; the which failing, down he sinketh into dejection and despair. Is the good man in affliction? he knoweth that it cometh not on him without God's wise appointment, nor without good intention toward him, for probation, exercise, and improvement of his virtues, or for wholesome correction of his bad dispositions; that it is only physic and

discipline to him, which shall have a comfortable issue; that it shall last no longer than it is expedient for him that it should: wherefore he patiently submitteth to it, and undergoeth it cheerfully, with the same mind wherewith a patient swalloweth down an unsavoury potion, which he presumeth will conduce to his health.* Never, indeed, hath any man enjoyed more real content, or hath been more truly satisfied, than good men have been in a seeming depth of adversity. What men ever upon earth have been more sorely afflicted, have underwent greater losses, disgraces, labours, troubles, distresses in any kind, than did the holy Apostles? Yet did they most heartily rejoice, exult, and triumph in them all.† Such a wondrous virtue hath piety to change all things into matter of consolation and joy. No condition in effect can be evil or sad to a pious man: his very sorrows are pleasant, his infirmities are wholesome, his wants enrich him, his disgraces adorn him, his burdens ease him; his duties are privileges, his falls are the grounds of advancement, his very sins (as breeding contrition, humility, circumspection, and vigilance) do better and profit him: whereas impiety doth spoil every condition, doth corrupt and embase all good things, doth embitter all the conveniences and comforts of life.

III. Piety doth virtually comprise within it all other profits, serving all the designs of them all: whatever kind of desirable good we can hope to find from any other profit, we may be assured to enjoy from it.

He that hath it is *ipso facto* vastly rich, is entitled to immense treasures of most precious wealth; in comparison whereto, all the gold and all the jewels in the world are mere baubles. He hath interest in God, and can call him his, who is the *all*, and in regard to whom all things existent are *less than nothing*. The infinite power and wisdom of God belong to him, to be ever, upon all fit occasions, employed for his benefit. All the inestimable treasures of heaven (a place infinitely more rich than the Indies) are his, after this moment of life, to have and to hold for ever: so that great reason had the Wise Man to say, that *In the house of the righteous is much treasure.*[r] Piety therefore is profitable, as immediately instating in wealth: and whereas the desired fruits of profit are chiefly these, honour, power, pleasure, safety, liberty, ease, opportunity of getting knowledge, means of benefiting others; all these, we shall see, do abundantly accrue from piety, and in truth only from it.

The pious man is in truth most honourable. *Inter homines pro summo est optimus*,[s] saith Seneca; whom Solomon translateth thus: *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.*[t] He is dignified by the most illustrious titles, a son of God, a friend and favourite to the sovereign King of the world, an heir of heaven, a denizen of the Jerusalem above: titles far surpassing all those which worldly state doth assume.* He is approved by the best and most infallible judgments, wherein true honour resideth. He is respected by God himself, by the holy angels, by the blessed saints, by all good and all wise persons; yea, commonly, by all men:[u] for the effects of genuine piety are so venerable and amiable, that scarce any man can do otherwise than in his heart much esteem him that worketh them.

The pious man is also the most potent man: he hath a kind of omnipotency, because he can do whatever he will, that is, what he ought to do;† and because the Divine Power is ever ready to assist him in his pious enterprises, so that *he can do all things by Christ that strengtheneth him.* He is able to combat and vanquish him that is *ὁ ἰσχυρὸς, the stout and mighty one;* to wage war with happy success *against principalities and powers.* He conquereth and commandeth himself, which is the bravest victory and noblest empire: he quelleth fleshly lusts, subdueth

* Scimus amicos Dei ab amantissimo, misericordissimo Patre Deo mala ista pœnalia recipere, non ut pœnam seu vindictam iracundiæ, sed magis ut correctiones et medicamenta stultitiæ, et adjumenta virtutis, ut malleationes sive fabricationes, et tunsiones, sive ablutiones, et candidationes.—*Guil. Par. de Sacram.*

† Ἐκείνους μὲν γὰρ ἐπεκούφιζεν ἡ χαρὰ τῆς μαρτυρίας, καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων, καὶ ἡ προς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγάπη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ πατρικόν.—Euseb. v. 1. Mart. Lugd.

* Κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητός.—Aristot. Eth. iii. 3.

† Tantum quantum vult potest, qui se nisi quod debet non putat posse.—*Senec. Ep.* xc.

[r] Prov. xv. 6. [t] Prov. xii. 26.

[s] Sen. Ep. xc. [u] Prov. xii. 8.

inordinate passions, and repelleth strong temptations.[x] He, *by his faith, overcometh the world* with a conquest far more glorious than ever any Alexander or Cæsar could do. He, in fine, doth perform the most worthy exploits, and deserveth the most honourable triumphs that man can do.

The pious man also doth enjoy the only true pleasures; hearty, pure, solid, durable pleasures; such pleasures as those of which the divine Psalmist singeth: *In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*[y] That *all joy in believing*, that *gaiety of hope*, that incessant *rejoicing in the Lord*, and *greatly delighting in his law*, that continual feast of a good conscience, that *serving the Lord with gladness*, that *exceeding gladness with God's countenance*, that *comfort of the Holy Spirit*, that *joy unspeakable and full of glory*;[z] the satisfaction resulting from the contemplation of heavenly truth, from the sense God's favour, and the pardon of his sins, from the influence of God's grace, from the hopes and anticipation of everlasting bliss: these are pleasures indeed, in comparison whereto all other pleasures are no more than brutish sensualities, sordid impurities, superficial touches, transient flashes of delight; such as should be insipid and unsavoury to a rational appetite; such as are tinctured with sourness and bitterness, have painful remorses or qualms consequent.‡ All the pious man's performances of duty and of devotion are full of pure satisfaction and delight here; they shall be rewarded with perfect and endless joy hereafter.

As for safety, the pious man hath it most absolute and sure; he being guarded by Almighty power and wisdom; *resting under the shadow of God's wings;* God *upholding him with his hand, ordering his steps, so that none of them shall slide, holding his soul in life, and suffering not his feet to be moved*;[a] he being, by the grace and mercy of God, secured from the assaults and impressions of all enemies, from sin and guilt, from the devil, world, and flesh, from death and hell, which are our most formidable, and in effect only dangerous enemies.

As for liberty, the pious man most entirely and truly doth enjoy that; he alone is free from captivity to that cruel tyrant Satan, from the miserable slavery to sin, from the grievous dominion of lust and passion. He can do what he pleaseth, having a mind to do only what is good and fit. The Law he observeth is worthily called *the perfect law of liberty*;[b] the Lord he serveth pretendeth only to command freemen and friends: *Ye are my friends*, said he, *if ye do whatever I command you;* and *If the Son set you free, then are ye free indeed.*[c] *

And for ease, it is he only that knoweth it; having his mind exempted from the distraction of care, from disorder of passion, from anguish of conscience, from the drudgeries and troubles of the world, from the vexations and disquiets which sin produceth. He findeth it made good to him, which our Lord inviting him did promise, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*:[d] he feeleth the truth of those divine assertions, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee*;[e] and, *Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*[f]

As for knowledge, the pious man alone doth attain it considerably, so as to become truly wise and learned to purpose. *Evil men*, saith the Wise Man himself, who knew well, *understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.*[g] It is the pious man that employeth his mind upon the most proper and worthy objects, that knoweth things

* Quid enim jucundius, quam Dei Patris et Domini reconciliatio, quam veritatis revelatio, quam errorum recognitio, quam tot retro criminum venia? quæ major voluptas, quam fastidium ipsius voluptatis, quam sæculi totius contemptus, quam vera libertas, quam conscientia integra, quam vita sufficiens, quam mortis timor nullus, &c.?—*Tert. de Spectac.* 29.

‡ Prov. xvi. 32; xxv. 28. *Vide* Sen. de Ben. v. 7.

[y] Ps. xvi. 11.

[z] Rom. xv. 13; Heb. iii. 6; Phil. iv. 4; Ps. xliii 4; cxii. 1; i. 2; cxix. 16, 24, 47, 70, 77, 92, 111, 143; c. 2, xxi. 6; xciv. 19; Is. xxix. 19; John xvi. 20, &c.; 1 Pet. i. 8; Rom. xiv. 17.

*Οὐ γαρ ἐστιν, οὐκ ἐστιν ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλ' ἢ μόνος ὁ Χριστῷ ζῶν.—Chrysost. ad Theod.

[a] Ps. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7; lvii. 1; lxi. 4; xci. 1; xxxvii. 24; cxix. 117; xxxvii. 23, 31; cxix. 133; lxvi. 9; cxix. 45.

[b] James i. 25.

[c] John xv. 14; viii. 36.

[d] Matt. xi. 28.

[e] Is. xxvi. 3.

[f] Psal. cxix. 165.

[g] Prov. xxviii. 5.

which certainly best deserve to be known, that hath his soul enriched with the choicest notions; he skilleth to aim at the best ends, and to compass them by the fittest means; he can assign to each thing its due worth and value; he can prosecute things by the best methods, and order his affairs in the best manner: so that he is sure not to be defeated or disappointed in his endeavours, nor to misspend his care and pains, without answerable fruit. He hath the best master to instruct him in his studies, and the best rules to direct him in his proceedings: he cannot be mistaken, seeing in his judgment and choice of things he conspireth with infallible wisdom. Therefore *ὁ εὐσεβῶν ἄκρως φιγοσοφεῖ, the pious man is the exquisite philosopher.*[h] *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. The fear of the Lord* (as is said again and again in Scripture) *is the head* (or *top*) *of wisdom. A good understanding have all they that keep his commandments.*[i]

Farther: the pious man is enabled and disposed (hath the power and the heart) most to benefit and oblige others. He doth it by his succour and assistance, by his instruction and advice, which he is ever ready to yield to any man upon fit occasion: he doth it by the direction and encouragement of his good example: he doth it by his constant and earnest prayers for all men: he doth it by drawing down blessings from heaven on the place where he resideth. He is upon all accounts the most true, the most common benefactor to mankind; all his neighbours, his country, the world, are in some way or other obliged to him: at least, he doth all the good he can, and in wish doth benefit all men.

Thus all the fruits and consequences of profit, the which engage men so eagerly to pursue it, do in the best kind and highest degree result from piety, and indeed only from it. All the philosophical bravadoes concerning a wise man being only rich, only honourable, only happy, only above fortune, are verified in the pious man: to him alone, as such, with a sure foundation, without vanity, with evident reason, those aphorisms may be applied. They are paradoxes and fictions abstracting from religion, or considering men only under the light and power of nature; but supposing our religion true, a good Christian soberly, without arrogance, in proportion and according to the measure of his piety, may assume them to himself, as the holy Apostles did: *I possess all things*, *I can do all things*, he may in a sort say after St. Paul.

As for all other profits, secluding it, they are but imaginary and counterfeit, mere shadows and illusions, yielding only painted shows instead of substantial fruit.[k]

If from bare worldly wealth (that which usurpeth the name of profit here) a man seeketh honour, he is deluded, for he is not thereby truly honourable; he is but a shining earth-worm, a well-trapped ass, a gaudy statue, a theatrical grandee: with God, who judgeth most rightly, he is mean and despicable: no intelligent person can inwardly respect him. Even here, in this world of fallacy and dotage, the wisest and soberest men, whose judgment usually doth sway that of others, cannot but contemn him, as master of no real good, nor fit for any good purpose; as seeing that in the end he will prove most beggarly and wretched.

If a man affecteth power thence, he is grievously mistaken: for, instead thereof, he proveth exceedingly feeble and impotent; able to perform nothing worthy a man, subject to fond humours and passions, servant to divers lusts and pleasures, *captivated by the devil at his pleasure*, overborne by temptation, hurried by the stream of the world, and liable to the strokes of fortune.

If he propoundeth to himself thence the enjoyment of pleasure, he will also much fail therein: for in lieu thereof he shall find care and trouble, surfeiting and disease, wearisome satiety and bitter regret; being void of all true delight in his mind, satisfaction in his conscience; nothing here being able to furnish solid and stable pleasure.

If he fancieth safety, he deludeth himself: for how can he be safe, who is destitute of God's protection and succour; who is the object of Divine wrath and vengeance; who is assailed by many fierce and powerful enemies; whom the

[h] Trismeg. [i] Job. xxviii. 28; Prov. ix. 10; i. 7; Psal. cxi. 10; cxix. 34, 99, 104, 130.

[k] Sen. Ep. 59.

roaring lion is ready to devour; whom death and *sudden destruction* are coming to seize upon; whom guilt threateneth, and hell gapeth for; who, without any guard or fence, standeth exposed to such imminent, such horrid and ghastly dangers?[l]

If he thirst for liberty, he will be frustrated: for he can be no otherwise than a slave, while he continueth impious; *servus tot dominorum, quot vitiorum, a slave to so many masters as he keepeth vices:*[m] a slave to himself and his own lusts; carrying about with him the fetters of unsatiable desire; being hampered with inconsistent and irregular affections.

Ease he cannot obtain, being oppressed with unwieldy burdens of sin, of care, of trouble; being tossed with restless agitations of lust and passion; being *like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*[n]

If he meaneth to get wisdom, he is out; for wisdom and impiety are incompatible things. All his knowledge is vain, all his speculations are no better than dreams, seeing he erreth in the main point, and is *not wise to salvation.*

He is, in fine, extremely mistaken, and in all his projects will be lamentably disappointed, whoever fancieth any true profit without piety: he never can attain to be so much as wealthy; but drudge and plod what he can, must be a beggar, and a forlorn wretch. For how can he be anywise rich, who doth want all the best things, the only valuable things in the world, which any man may have, which any good man doth possess? How can he be rich, who is destitute of the most needful accomodations of life; who constantly feedeth on the coarsest and most sordid fare (the dust of pelf, the dung of sensuality;) who hath no faithful or constant friends (nothing earthly can be such;) who is master of nothing but dirt, or chaff, or smoke? Whereas also riches do consist, not in what one enjoyeth at present (for that can be little), but in a presumed ability to enjoy afterward what he may come to need or desire; or in well-grounded hopes that he shall never fall into want or distress. How can that man be rich, who hath not any confidence in God, any interest in him, any reason to expect his blessing? yea, who hath much ground to fear the displeasure of him, in whose hand all things are, and who arbitrarily disposeth of all? Piety, therefore, is the only profitable thing, according to just esteem. *She is more precious than rubies, and all the things we can desire are not to be compared to her.*[o] Upon this account it is most true, what the Psalmist affirmeth, *A little that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly.*[p]

IV. That commendation is not to be omitted, which is nearest at hand, and suggested by St. Paul himself to back this assertion concerning the universal profitableness of piety; *For*, saith he, *it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:* that is, God hath promised to reward it with blessings appertaining to this mortal life, and with those which concern the future eternal state.

As for the blessings of this life, although God hath not promised to load the godly man with affluence of worldly things, not to put him into a splendid and pompous garb; not to dispense to him that which may serve for pampering the flesh, or gratifying wanton fancy; not to exempt him from all the inconveniences to which human nature and this worldly state are subject; yet hath he promised to furnish him with whatever is needful or convenient for him, in due measure and season, the which he doth best understand. There is no good thing which a man naturally desireth, or reasonably can wish for, which is not in express terms proposed as a reward, or a result of piety.

In general, it is declared, that *Blessings are upon the head of the just;* that *no good thing God will withhold from them that walk uprightly;* that, whatever otherwise doth fall out, *it assuredly shall be well with them that fear God:* that, *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee;* that, *There shall no evil happen to the*

[l] 1 Thess. v. 3; Prov. x. 29.
[m] August. Prov. xxv. 28.
[n] Isa. lvii. 20.
[o] Prov. iii. 15. [p] Ps. xxxvii. 16.

just; that *All things work together for good to them that love God.*[q]

Particularly, there are promised to the pious man,

A supply of all wants.—*The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul. There is no want to them that fear God. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*[r]

A protection in all dangers.—*The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling: He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*[s]

Guidance in all his undertakings and proceedings.—*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord——none of his steps shall slide. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*[t]

Success and prosperity in his designs.—*Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.*—*Whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.*—*Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established; and the light shall shine upon thy ways. The Lord shall command a blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto. Thine expectation shall not be cut off.*[u]

Comfortable enjoying the fruits of his industry.—*Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands.*[v]

Satisfaction of all reasonable desires.—*The desire of the righteous shall be granted. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he will hear their cry, and will save them.*[x]

Firm peace and quiet.—*The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Great peace have they which love thy law. The fruit of righteousness is sowed in peace.*[y]

Joy and alacrity.—*Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.*[z]

Support and comfort in afflictions.—*He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*[a]

Deliverance from trouble.—*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.*[b]

Preservation and recovery from mishaps, and miscarriages.—*Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*[c]

Preferments of all sorts, to honour and dignity, to wealth and prosperity.—*Wait upon the Lord, and keep his way; and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land. By humility and fear of the Lord are riches and honour. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord——wealth and riches are in his house. The upright shall have good things in possession. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasure. The tabernacle of the righteous shall flourish.*[d]

Long life.—*The fear of the Lord prolongeth days. By me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. Let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add unto thee.*[e]

[q] Prov. x. 6; Deut. xxviii. 8; xxx. 9; Ps. lxxxiv. 11; Eccles. viii. 12; Isa. iii. 10; Ps. cxxviii. 1, 2; (Prov. viii. 35); Prov. xii. 21; Rom. viii. 28.

[r] Prov. x. 3; xiii. 25; Psal. xxxiv. 9, 10.; xxxiii. 19; xxxvii. 3, 19.

[s] Psal. xxxiii. 18; xxxiv. 20; cxii. 7; xxxvii. 28: xci. 10, 11.

[t] Ps. xxxvii. 23, &c.; Prov. iii. 6; (Prov. xi. 3, 5; xvi. 3).

[u] Ps. xxxvii. 5; i. 3; Job xxii. 28; Deut xxviii. 8, 12; Prov, xxiii. 18. [v] Ps. cxxviii. 2

[x] Prov. x. 24; Psal. xxxvii. 4; cxlv. 19.

[y] Isa. xxxii. 17; Psal. cxix. 165; James iii. 18.

[z] Psal. xcvii. 11; Prov. xxix. 6.

[a] Psal. cxlvii. 3; xxxi. 24; xxvii. 14.

[b] Ps. xxxiv. 19, 20; xxxvii. 39.

[c] Ps. xxxvii. 24.

[d] Psal. xxxvii. 34; Prov. xxii. 4; Ps. cxii. 1, 3: Prov. xviii. 10; (Job xxxvi. 7); Job xxxvi. 11; Prov. xiv. 11.

[e] Prov. x. 27; ix. 11; iii. 1, 2, 16.

A good name endureth after death.—*The memory of the just is blessed.*[f]

Blessings entailed on posterity.—*His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed. The root of the righteous shall not be moved.*[g]

Thus is a liberal dispensation even of temporal goods annexed by God's infallible word unto the practice of piety. It is indeed more frequently, abundantly, and explicitly promised unto God's ancient people, as being a conditional ingredient of the covenant made with them, exhibited in that as a recompense of their external performance of religious works prescribed in their Law.[h] The Gospel doth not so clearly propound it, or so much insist upon it, as not principally belonging to the evangelical covenant, the which, in reward to the performance of its conditions by us, peculiarly doth offer blessings spiritual, and relating to the future state: as also scarce deserving to be mentioned in comparison to those superior blessings.[i] Yet as the celestial benefits, although not openly tendered in the Jewish Law, were yet mystically couched therein, and closely designed for the spiritual and hearty practisers of religion; so is the collation of temporal accommodations to be understood to belong to all pious Christians: there is a *codicil*, as it were, annexed to the New Testament, in which God signifieth his intention to furnish his children with all that is needful or convenient for them. His providence hath not ceased to watch over us, his bounty doth not fail toward us even in this respect; his care will not be wanting to feed us and clothe us comfortably, to protect us from evil, to prosper our good undertakings. Hence doth he command us to care for nothing, but *to cast our care upon him, to recommend our business to him, because he careth for us;* he *will never forsake us;* he will hear our prayers, and help us.[k] Hence we are enjoined *not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*[l] Hence it is said, that *The divine power hath given us all things pertaining unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us to glory and virtue.*[m] Hence it is promised by our Lord, that, *If we seek first the kingdom of God, all things shall be added to us.*[n] Hence it is inferred, as consequential to the nature of the evangelical dispensation, that we cannot want any good thing: *He*, saith St. Paul, *that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*[o] In fine, hence it is proposed as notorious, that nothing is permitted to fall out otherwise than as conduceth to to our good. *We know*, saith St. Paul, *that all things work together for good unto those that love God:* nor *will God*, in any case, *suffer us to be tempted*, by any want or pressure, *beyond what we are able to bear.*[p] Thus is piety evidently profitable, as *having the promises of this life*, or exhibiting all temporal blessings desirable to the practisers thereof.

But infinitely more profitable it is, as *having the promises of the future life*, or as procuring a title to those incomparably more excellent blessings of the other world; those *indefectible treasures*, that *incorruptible, undefiled, and never-fading inheritance, reserved in heaven for us;* that *exceeding weight of glory;* those *ineffable joys of paradise*,[q] that lightsome countenance and beatifying presence of God; that inconceivably and unexpressibly joyful, glorious, perfect, and endless bliss; briefly, all that is comprised and intimated in those words of the Apostle, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*[r] Infinitely profitable surely must that be, which procureth those things for us: and in these respects great reason had St. Paul to say, that *Godliness is profitable for all things.*

But farther to evidence and recommend this point, I might propound certain peculiar advantages arising from piety, which have a very general influence upon our lives, and do afford unto them exceeding benefit; but this I must, in regard to the time and your patience, at present forbear.

[f] Prov. x. 7. 25.
[g] Ps. xxxvii. 25; cxii. 2.; (Exod. xx. 6;) Prov. xii. 3.
[h] Prov. xi. 31; Deut. xxviii. 1; vii. 12; xi. 13.
[i] 2 Cor. iv. 17; Rom. viii. 18.
[k] 1 Pet. v. 7; Phil. iv. 6; Heb. xiii. 5.
[l] Matt. vi. 25; 1 Tim. vi. 17.
[m] 2 Pet. i. 3.
[n] Matt. vi. 33.
[o] Rom. viii. 32.
[p] Rom. viii 28; 1 Cor. x. 13.
[q] Luke xii. 33; 1 Pet. i. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13.
[r] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

SERMON III.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 Tim. iv. 8.—*but godliness is profitable for all things.*

In discoursing formerly upon these words, I did propound divers general considerations, serving to confirm and recommend this assertion of St. Paul. I shall now insist upon some others more particular, which yet seem much conducible to the same purpose, declaring the vast utility of religion or piety.

I. We may consider that religion doth prescribe the truest and best rules of action; thence enlightening our mind, and rectifying our practice in all matters, and upon all occasions, so that whatever is performed according to it, is done well and wisely, with a comely grace in regard to others, with a cheerful satisfaction in our own mind, with the best assurance that things are here capable of, to find happy success and beneficial fruit.

Of all things in the world, there is nothing more generally profitable than light: by it we converse with the world, and have all things set before us; by it we truly and easily discern things in their right magnitude, shape, and colour; by it we guide our steps safely in prosecution of what is good, and shunning what is noxious; by it our spirits are comfortably warmed and cheered, our life, consequently our health, our vigour, and activity are preserved. The like benefits doth religion, which is the light of our soul, yield to it. Pious men are *children of the light;* pious works are works of light *shining before men. God's word* (or true religion) *is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path;*[a] enabling us to perceive things, and judge rightly of them; teaching us to walk straitly and surely, without erring or stumbling; qualifying us to embrace what is useful, and to avoid hurtful things; preserving our spiritual life, and disposing us to act well with a vigorous alacrity: without it a man is stark blind, and utterly benighted, *gropeth* in doubt, wandereth in mistake, trippeth upon all occasions, and often falleth into mischief. *The path of the just*, saith the Wise Man, *is as the shining light. The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way; but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.*[b]

Again: it is a fair ornament of a man, and a grand convenience both to himself, and to others with whom he converseth or dealeth, to act regularly, uniformly, and consistently; freeing a man's self from distraction and irresolution in his mind, from change and confusion in his proceedings; securing others from delusion and disappointment in their transactions with him. Even a bad rule constantly observed, is therefore better than none: order and perseverance in any way seemeth more convenient than roving and tossing about in uncertainties.* But, secluding a regard to the precepts of religion, there can hardly be any sure or settled rule, which firmly can engage a man to, or effectually restrain a man from, anything.

There is scarce in nature anything so wild, so untractable, so unintelligible, as a man who hath no bridle of conscience to guide or check him. A profane man is like a ship, without anchor to stay him, or rudder to steer him, or compass to guide him; so that he is tossed with any wind, and driven with any wave, none knoweth whither: whether bodily temper doth sway him, or passion doth hurry him, or interest doth pull him, or example leadeth him, or company inveigleth and haileth him, or humour transporteth him; whether any such variable and unaccountable causes determine him, or divers of them together distract him: whence he so rambleth and hovereth, that he can seldom himself tell what in any case he should do, nor can another guess it; so that you cannot at any time know where to find him, or how to deal with him; you cannot with reason ever rely upon him, so *unstable he is in all his ways.* He is in effect a mere child, all humour and giddiness, somewhat worse than a beast, which, following the instinct of its nature, is constant and regular, and thence tractable; or at least so untractable, that no

[a] Luke xvi. 8; Eph. v. 8. 1 Thess. v. 5; John xii. 36; Matt. v. 16; Eph. v. 11; Psal. cxix. 105.

* Via eunti aliquid extremum est; error immensus est.—*Sen. Ep.* 16.

[b] Is. lix. 10; Job. v. 14; Deut. xxviii. 29; Prov. iv. 18, 19; Prov. xiii. 6; xi. 3, 5.

man will be deceived in meddling with him. Nothing, therefore, can be more unmanly than such a person; nothing can be more unpleasant than to have to do with him.*

But a pious man, being steadily governed by conscience, and a regard to certain principles, doth both understand himself, and is intelligible to others: he presently descrieth what in any case he is to do, and can render an account of his acting: you may know him clearly, and assuredly tell what he will do, and may therefore fully confide in him.†

What, therefore, law and government are to the public, things necessary to preserve the world in order, peace, and safety (that men may know what to do, and distinguish what is their own), that is piety to each man's private state, and to ordinary conversation: it freeth a man's own life from disorder and distraction; it prompteth men how to behave themselves toward one another with security and confidence.

This it doth by confining our practice within settled bounds: but this advantage appeareth greater, considering that the rules which it prescribeth are the best that can be. Such they must needs be, as proceeding from infallible wisdom, and immense goodness; being indeed no other than laws which the all-wise and most gracious Lord and Maker of the world, out of tender kindness to his subjects and creatures, with especial regard to our welfare, hath been pleased to enact and declare. What of old he said to the Israelites concerning their laws, may with greater advantage be applied to those which should regulate our lives: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?*[c] (For thy good; that was the design of their being commanded, thereto the observance of them did tend.) And that commendation, which by the Levites in Nehemiah is given to that, doth more clearly and fully agree to the Christian (general and perfect) institution: *Thou camest down from mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments.*[d] And, *The law*, saith the Apostle Paul, *is holy; the commandment is holy, just, and good*:[e] as such it is recommended to us by its Author; so we Christians are by many great arguments assured that it is, and that it is such even our natural reason dictateth; so (as to the chief instances thereof) the most wise and sober men always have acknowledged, so the general consent doth avow, and so even common experience doth attest. For, heartily to love and reverence the Maker of all things, who by everything apparent before us demonstrateth himself incomprehensibly powerful, wise, and good, to be kind and charitable to our neighbours, to be just and faithful in our dealings, to be sober and modest in our minds, to be meek and gentle in our demeanours, to be staunch and temperate in our enjoyments, and the like principal rules of duty, are such, that the common reason of men and continual experience do approve them as hugely conducible to the puplic good of men, and to each man's private welfare. So notoriously beneficial they appear, that for the justification of them we might appeal even to the judgment and conscience of those persons who are most concerned to derogate from them. For hardly can any man be so senseless, or so lewd, as seriously to disapprove or condemn them, as inwardly to blame or slight those who truly act according to them. The will of men sometimes may be so depraved, that dissolute persons wantonly and heedlessly may scoff at and seem to disparage goodness; that good men, by very bad men, for doing well, may be envied and hated (their being so treated is commonly an argument of the goodness of their persons and of their ways:) but the understanding of men can hardly be so corrupted, that piety, charity, justice, temperance, meekness, can in good earnest considerately by any man be disallowed, or that persons apparently practising them can be despised;

* Nihil est tam occupatum, tam multiforme, tot ac tam variis affectibus concisum atque laceratum, quam mala mens.—*Quint.* xii. 1.

† Οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς ἑαυτοῖς ὁμονοοῦσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις, ὑπὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὄντες, ὡς εἰπεῖν· τῶν τοιούτων μένει γὰρ τὰ βουλήματα, καὶ οὐ μεταῤῥεῖ, ὥσπερ εὔριπος.—Arist. Eth. ix. 6.

[c] Deut. x. 12, 13.

[d] Neh. ix. 13.

[e] Rom. vii. 12.

but rather, in spite of all contrary prejudice and disaffections, such things and such persons cannot but in judgment and heart be esteemed by all men. The lustre of them, by a natural and necessary efficacy (like that of heaven's glorious light) dazzleth the sight and charmeth the spirits of all men living; the beauty of them irresistibly conquereth and commandeth in the apprehensions of men: the more they are observed, the more useful and needful they appear for the good of men; all the fruits which grow from the observance of them being to all men's taste very pleasant, to all men's experience very wholesome. Indeed, all the good whereby common life is adorned, is sweetened, is rendered pleasant and desirable, doth spring thence; all the mischiefs which infest particular men, and which disturb the world, palpably do arise from the transgression or neglect thereof.

If we look on a person sticking to those rules, we shall perceive him to have a cheerful mind and composed passions; to to be at peace within, and satisfied with himself; to live in comely order, in good repute, in fair correspondence, and firm concord with his neighbours. If we mark what preserveth the body sound and lusty, what keepeth the mind vigorous and brisk, what saveth and improveth the estate, what upholdeth the good name, what guardeth and graceth a man's whole life; it is nothing else but proceeding in our demeanour and dealings according to the honest and wise rules of piety. If we view a place where these commonly in good measure are observed, we shall discern, that peace and prosperity do flourish there; that all things proceed on sweetly and fairly; that men generally drive on conversation and commerce together contentedly, delightfully, advantageously, yielding friendly advice and aid mutually, striving to render one another happy; that few clamours or complaints are heard there, few contentions or stirs do appear, few disasters or tragedies do occur; that such a place hath indeed much of the face, much of the substance of Paradise.

But if you mind a person who neglecteth them, you will find his mind galled with sore remorse, racked with anxious fears and doubts, agitated with storms of passion and lust, living in disorder and disgrace, jarring with others, and no less dissatisfied with himself. If you observe what doth impair the health, doth weaken and fret the mind, doth waste the estate, doth blemish the reputation, doth expose the whole life to danger and trouble; what is it but thwarting these good rules? If you consider a place where these are much neglected, it will appear like a wilderness of savage beasts, or a sty of foul swine, or a hell of cursed fiends; full of roaring and tearing, of factions and feuds, of distractions and confusions, of pitiful objects, of doleful moans, of tragical events. Men are there wallowing in filth, wildly revelling, bickering and squabbling, defaming, circumventing, disturbing and vexing one another; as if they affected nothing more than to render one another as miserable as they can. It is from lust and luxury, from ambition and avarice, from envy and spite, and the like dispositions, which religion chiefly doth interdict, that all such horrid mischiefs do spring.

In fine, the precepts of religion are no other than such as physicians would prescribe for the health of our bodies, as politicians would avow needful for the peace of the state, as Epicurean philosophers do recommend for the tranquillity of our mind, and pleasure of our lives; such as common reason dictateth, and daily trial showeth conducible to our welfare in all respects: which, consequently, were there no law exacting them of us, we should in wisdom choose to observe, and voluntarily impose on ourselves, confessing them to be fit matters of law, as most advantageous and requisite to the good (general and paticular) of mankind. So that what Plutarch reporteth Solon to have said, that *he had so squared his laws to the citizens, that all of them might clearly perceive, that to observe them was more for their benefit and interest than to violate them*,[f] is far more true concerning the divine laws.

II. We may consider more particularly, that piety yieldeth to the practiser all kind of interior content, peace, and joy; freeth him from all kinds of dissatisfaction, regret, and disquiet; which is an inestimably great advantage: for certainly the happiness and misery of men are

[f] Plut. in Sol.

wholly or chiefly seated and founded in the mind. If that is in a good state of health, rest, and cheerfulness, whatever the person's outward condition or circumstances be, he cannot be wretched: if that be distempered or disturbed, he cannot be happy. For what if a man seem very poor; if he be abundantly satisfied in his own possessions and enjoyments? What if he tasteth not the pleasures of sense; if he enjoyeth purer and sweeter delights of mind? What if tempests of fortune surround him; if his mind be calm and serene? What if he have few or no friends; if he yet be thoroughly in peace and amity with himself, and can delightfully converse with his own thoughts? What if men slight, censure, or revile him; if he doth value his own state, doth approve his own actions, doth acquit himself of blame in his own conscience? Such external contingencies can surely no more prejudice a man's real happiness, than winds blustering abroad can harm or trouble him that abideth in a good room within doors, than storms and fluctuations at sea can molest him who standeth firm upon the shore. On the other hand, the greatest affluence of seeming goods will avail nothing, if real content of mind be wanting. For what will the highest eminence of outward state import to him that is dejected in his own conceit?[g] What if the world court and bless him, or if all people do admire and applaud him; if he be displeased with, if he condemneth, if he despiseth himself? What if the weather look fair and bright without, if storms rage in his breast, if black clouds do overcast his soul? What if he do abound with friends, and enjoy peace abroad; if he find distraction at home, and is at cruel variance with himself? How can a man enjoy any satisfaction, or relish any pleasure, while sore remorse doth sting him, or solicitous doubts and fears do rack him?*

Now, that from the practice of religion, and from it alone, such inward content and pleasure do spring; that it only ministereth reason of content, and disposeth the mind to enjoy it; that it extirpateth the grounds and roots of discontent; that it is the only mother of true, sober alacrity and tranquillity of mind, will, upon considering things, be manifest.

There is no other thing here in this world that can yield any solid or stable content to our mind. For all present enjoyments are transient and evanid;[h] and of any future thing, in this kingdom of change and contingency, there can be no assurance. There is nothing below large enough to fill our vast capacities, or to satiate our boundless desires, or to appease our squeamish delicacy.[i] There is nothing whose sweetness we do not presently exhaust and suck dry; whereof thence we do not soon grow weary, quite loathing, or faintly liking it. There is not anything which is not slippery and fleeting; so that we can for a long time hope to possess it, or for any time can enjoy it, without restless care in keeping it, and anxious fear of losing it. Nothing there is, in the pursuance, the custody, the defence and maintenance whereof, we are not liable to disappointments and crosses. Nothing consequently there is productive of any sound content to the fastidious, impatient, greedy, and restless heart of man. The greatest confluence of present, corporeal, secular things (of all the health, the riches, the dignity, the power, the friendships and dependencies, the wit, the learning and wisdom, the reputation and renown in this world), will not afford much of it: which is yet but an imaginary supposition; for in effect hardly do all such accommodations of life concur in any state. There is ever some *dead fly* in our box, which marreth our *ointment*;[k] some adherent inconvenience, which soureth the gust of our enjoyments: there is always some good thing absent, which we do want or long for; some ill thing present, or in prospect, which we abhor, would avoid, do fear may come. If, therefore, we would find content, we must not seek it here; we must want it, or have it from another

* Chrysostom. in Rom. i. Or. i. Εὐθυμίαν γὰρ καὶ χαρὰν οὐκ ἀρχῆς μέγεθος, οὐ χρημάτων πλῆθος, οὐ δυναστείας ὄγκος, οὐκ ἰσχὺς σώματος, οὐ πολυτέλεια τραπέζης, οὐχ ἱματίων κόσμος, οὐκ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ποιεῖν, εἴωθεν, ἀλλ' ἢ κατόρθωμα μονον πνευματικὸν, καὶ συνειδὸς ἀγαθόν.

[g] Prov. xviii. 4.

[h] Prov. xxvii. 24.

[i] Prov. xxvii. 20.

[k] Eccles. x. 1.

world: it must come hither from heaven, and thence only piety can fetch it down. This, instead of these unsatisfying, uncertain, and unstable things, supplieth us with goods adequate to our most outstretched wishes, infallibly sure, incessantly durable; *an indefectible treasure, an incorruptible inheritance, an unshakeable kingdom*,* a perfect and endless joy, capable to replenish the vastest heart: which he that hath a good title to, or a confident hope of, how can he be otherwise than extremely pleased, than fully content? It assureth the favour and friendship of God, of him that is absolute Lord and disposer of all things: the which he that hath, and confideth in, what can he want or wish more? what can he fear? what can annoy or dismay him? what can hap to him, worthy to be deemed evil or sad? What is poverty to him, for whom God is concerned to provide? what is disgrace to him, that hath the regard and approbation of God? what is danger to him, whom God continually protecteth? what can any distress work on him, whom God doth comfort, and will relieve? what is any thing to him, who is sensible that all things are purposely disposed to him by that Wisdom which perfectly knoweth what is best; by that Goodness which entirely loveth him? In fine, he that is conscious to himself of being well-affected in mind, and acting the best way, who is satisfied in the state of his soul, secure from God's displeasure, and hopeful of his favour, what can make any grievous impression on him? What other affections than such as are most grateful and pleasant can lodge in his soul? Joy and peace have natural seeds in such a mind, and necessarily must spring up there; in proportion, I mean, and according to the degrees of piety resident therein.

The Epicureans did conceit and boast, that having, by their atheistical explications of natural effects and common events here, discarded the belief and dread of religion, they had laid a strong foundation for tranquillity of mind, had driven away all the causes of grief and fear, so that nothing then remained troublesome or terrible unto us; and consequently, what, said they, could forbid, but that we should be entirely contented, glad, and happy?—*Nos exæquat victoria cælo;* no God then surely could be more happy than we. But their attempt in many respects was vain and lame. They presumed of a victory which it is impossible to obtain: and supposing they had got it, their triumph would not have been so glorious, their success would not have been so great, as they pretended. For seeing no Epicurean discourse can baffle the potent arguments which persuade religion (those arguments which the visible constitution of nature, the current tradition of all ages, the general consent of men, the pregnant attestations of history and experience concerning supernatural and miraculous events, do afford;) since the being and providence of God have proofs so clear and valid, that no subtlety of man can so far evade them as not to be shaken with them, as wholly to be freed from doubt and suspicion of their truth; since there can be no means of evincing the negative part in those questions to be true or probable; it is impossible that any considering man, in this cause against religion, should suppose himself to have acquired an absolute and secure victory, or that he should reap substantial fruit of comfort thence. It cannot be, that any man should enjoy any perfect quiet, without acting so as to get some good hope of avoiding those dreadful mischiefs, which religion threateneth to the transgressors of its precepts. Were there indeed but reason enough to stir, if not to stagger, an infidel; were it somewhat dubious whether, yea, were it great odds that there are not reserved any punishments for impiety, as indeed there is, if not the perfectest assurance imaginable, yet vast advantage on the contrary side; were there but any small reason for a judgment to come, as there are apparently very many and great ones; had most men conspired in denying Providence, as ever generally they have consented in avowing it; were there a pretence of miracles for establishing the mortality and impunity of souls, as there have been numberless strongly testified by good witnesses and great events, to confirm the opposite doctrines; did most wise and sober men judge in favour of irrelig-

* Θησαυρὸν ἀνέκλειπτον, κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον.

ion, as commonly they ever did and still do otherwise; yet wisdom would require that men should choose to be pious, since otherwise no man can be thoroughly secure. It is a wildness, not to dread the least possibility of incurring such horrible mischiefs: any hazard of such importance cannot but startle a man in his wits. To be in the least obnoxious to eternal torments, if men would think upon it as men (that is, as rational and provident creatures), could not but disturb them. And indeed so it is in experience; for whatever they say, or seem, all atheists and profane men are inwardly suspicious and fearful; they care not to die, and would gladly escape the trial of what shall follow death. But let us grant or imagine the Epicurean successful as he could wish in this enterprise of subduing religion: yet except therewith he can also trample down reason, new mould human nature, subjugate all natural appetites and passions, alter the state of things here, and transform the world, he will yet in the greatest part fail of his conceited advantages; very short he will fall of triumphing in a contented and quiet mind. That which accrueth thence will at most be no more than some negative content, or a partial indolency, arising from his being rescued from some particular cares and fears; which exceedeth not the tranquillity of a beast, or the stupidity of one that is out of his senses: that is all he can claim, which yet is more than he can ever compass. For he cannot be as a beast, or a mere sot, if he would: reason, reflecting on present evils, and boding others future, will afflict him; his own unsatiable desires, unavoidable fears, and untameable passions, will disquiet him. Were the other world quite out of his faith, or his thought, yet this world would yield trouble sufficient to render him void of any steady rest or solid joy. All men ever have, and ever will complain, that the burdens, crosses, satieties of this life, do much surpass the conveniences and comforts of it. So that, were no other to be expected or feared, this of itself would become grievous and nauseous; we should soon have enough or too much of it, without a support and supply from other-where.* In the largest affluence of things, in the deepest calm of our state, we are apt to nauseate, and are weary even of our prosperity itself; the which indeed commonly hath ingredients not only somewhat unsavoury, but very bitter and loathsome. We may add, that had those profane attempters quite banished religion, they with it must have driven away all the benefits and comforts of it: which, even supposing them but imaginary, are yet the greatest which common life doth need, or can desire: with it they would send packing justice, fidelity, charity, sobriety, and all solid virtue, things which cannot firmly subsist without conscience: which being gone, human life would be the most disorderly, most unsafe, most wretched and contemptible thing that can be; nothing but insipid and flashy sensualities would be left behind to comfort a man with; and those hardly any man (by reason of competitions and contentions for them, nowise restrainable) could enjoy quietly or safely. It is, therefore, piety alone, which, by raising hopes of blessings and joys incomparably superior to any here, that cannot be taken from us, can lay any ground of true content, of substantial and positive content; such as consisteth not only in removing the objects and causes of vexatious passions, but in employing the most pleasant affections (love, hope, joy) with a delightful complacence upon their proper and most noble objects. *The kingdom of God* (and that only, no other kingdom hath that privilege) *consisteth in righteousness* (first, then in) *peace and spiritual joy.*[l] No philosopher, with truth and reason, can make that overture to us, which our Lord doth: *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*[m] Out of religion there can be no aphorism pretended like to that of the Prophet: *Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.*[n]

If, indeed, we distinctly survey all the grounds and sources of content, it will appear that religion only can afford it.

Doth it result from a well governing and ordering our passions? Then it is plain, that only a pious man is capable thereof: for piety only can affect that; it alone, with the powerful aid of Divine

* Non tempestate vexor, sed nausea.—*Sen. de Tranq. An.* 1.

[l] Rom. xiv. 17. [m] Matt. xi. 28. [n] Isa. xxvi. 3.

grace, doth guide our passions by exact rules, doth set them upon worthy objects, doth temper and tune them in just harmony, doth seasonably curb and check them, doth rightly correct and reform them.*

This no bare reason (which naturally is so dim and so feeble in man) can achieve: much less can unreasonableness do it, which is ever prevalent in irreligious persons. Their passions do ever run wildly and at random in no good pace, within no good compass, toward the meanest and basest objects; whence they can have no rest or quiet in their minds. As they are constantly offending, so will they ever be punishing themselves with intestine broils and conflicts, with dissatisfactions and regrets. Hence, *There is no peace to the wicked.*[o] *He is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest.*[p] *God* (As St. Austin speaketh) *hath said it, and so it is, Every inordinate mind is a punishment to itself.*†

Doth content spring from a hearty approbation of, or a complacence in, a man's own actions; from reflection that he constantly doth act according to reason and wisdom, to justice and duty? Then can the pious man alone pretend to it, who knoweth that he walketh *inoffensively towards God and man;*‡ that he consulteth his own best interest and welfare; that assuredly no bad consequence can attend his unblameable behaviour; that most wise men have declared their approbation of his proceedings; that if he prove in his chief design mistaken, yet no mischief can thence befall him; yea, that he is not thereby quite disappointed, seeing even much present satisfaction and convenience do arise up to him from his practice.

Doth content grow from a sound and healthful constitution of soul? It is the pious man alone that hath that, whose mind is clear from distempers of vice and passion. The impious man is infirm, out of order, full of disease and pain, according to the Prophet's description of him;—*The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.*[q]

Doth content arise specially from good success in our attempts, or from prosperous events befalling us? Then it is the pious man who is most capable thereof: for he only is secure that what seemeth good and prosperous is really such to him, as meant for his good by the Divine goodness, as tending thereto by the guidance of infallible wisdom. As he only hath ground to hope for success, because he confideth in God, because he dutifully seeketh God's help, because God is favourably disposed toward him, because God *ordereth his steps*, because God is by promise engaged to bless him, because he is conscious of intentions to render God thanks and praise for it, to employ his success to God's honour and service: so he only can be satisfied with the appearance of success, being able with assurance to say after St. Paul, *We know that to those who love God, all things cooperate for good.*[r]

Is security from danger, from trouble, from want, from all evil, a source or matter of content? It certainly doth attend the pious man; God being his especial protector, his comforter, his purveyor. *There shall no evil befal the just; There shall no plague come near his dwelling. God keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. He delivereth the righteous out of their troubles. The desire of the righteous shall be granted. There is no want to them that fear God.*[s] So do the holy oracles assure us.

Doth contentedness spring from sufficiency, real or apprehended? This appertaineth peculiarly to the pious man: for, having God, the master of all, for *his portion*, he hath the richest estate that can be; he hath all that he can desire; he cannot but take himself to have enough. Hence *Godliness with contentedness* (μετ'

* Mala mens—cum insidiatur, spe, curis, labore distringitur; et jam cum sceleris compos fuerit, solicitudine, pœnitentia, pœnarum omnium exspectatione torquetur.—*Quint.* xii. 1.

† Nulla major pœna nequitiæ est, quam quod sibi ac suis displicet.—*Sen. Ep.* 42.

Τιμωρία πάσης ἀδικίας ἀκόλουθος.—Plat. de Leg. 5.

Deus jussit, et ita est, Sibi pœna est omnis inordinatus animus.—*Aug. Conf.*

‡ Nisi sapienti sua non placent: omnis stultitia laborat fastidio sui.—*Sen. Ep.* 9.

[o] Isa. xlviii. 22. [p] Isa. lvii. 20.

[q] Isa. i. 5, 6. [r] Rom. viii. 28.

[s] Prov. xii. 21; Ps. xci. 10; xxxiv. 20. 17; Prov. x. 24; Ps. xxxiv. 9.

αὐταρκείας, *with sufficiency*) *is*, as St. Paul saith, μέγας πορισμὸς, *the great way of gaining*.[t] He saith it not, as supposing godliness and contentedness to be separable; but rather as implying godliness therefore to be most gainful, because sufficiency and contentedness do ever attend it. In fine, if that saying of Seneca be true, that, *If to any man the things he possesseth do not seem most ample, although he be master of the whole world, he is yet miserable*;* then assuredly the pious man only can be happy; for to him alone his possessions can seem the largest and best, such as there can be no possible accession to, or amendment of. For nothing can be greater or better than God, in whom he hath a steadfast propriety, whose infinite power and wisdom are engaged to do him the utmost good that he is capable of. And farther,

III. Seeing we have mentioned happiness, or the *summum bonum*, the utmost scope of human desire, we do add, that piety doth surely confer it. Happiness, whatever it be, hath certainly an essential coherence with piety. These are reciprocal propositions, both of them infallibly true, He that is pious is happy; and, He that is happy is pious. No man doth undertake or prosecute anything, which he doth not apprehend in some order or degree conducing to that which all men under a confused notion regard and tend to, which they call happiness, the highest good, the chiefest desirable thing. But in their judgments about this thing, or the means of attaining it, as men dissent much; so of necessity most of them must be mistaken. Most, indeed, do aim and shoot at a mere shadow of profit, or at that which is very little considerable, and in comparison nothing at all; which little conduceth to the perfection of their nature, or the satisfaction of their desire. If they miss the mark, they are disappointed; if they hit it, they are no less, and in effect hit nothing. But whatever this grand matter is, in whatever it consisteth, however it be procured; be it the possession and fruition of some special choice goods, or an aggregation and affluence of all goods; piety surely is the main ingredient and principal cause thereof. All other goods without it are insignificant and unuseful thereto; and it cannot be wanting where piety is. Be a man never so rich, so powerful, so learned and knowing, so prosperous in his affairs, so honourable in the opinions and affections of men: yet nowise happy can he be, if he is not pious; seeing he wanteth the best goods, and is subject to the worst evils; seeing he wanteth the love and favour of God, he wanteth peace and satisfaction of conscience, he wanteth a right enjoyment of present things, he wanteth security concerning his final welfare. Be he never so poor, so low in the eyes of men, so forlorn and destitute of worldly conveniences; yet if he be pious, he cannot be wretched: for he hath an interest in goods incomparably most precious, and is safe from all considerable evils; he hath a free resort to the inexhaustible fountain of all happiness, he hath a right to immense and endless felicity, the which eminently containeth all the goods we are capable of; he is possessed thereof in hope and certain reversion; there is but a moment to pass before his complete fruition of it. The want of all other petty things no more can maim the integrity of his felicity, than cutting the hair, or pareing the nails, do mutilate a man; all other things are but superfluities or excresences in regard to the constitution of happiness. Whatever happeneth, that will assuredly be true, which is so much inculcated in the holy Scripture, *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; happy shall he be, and it shall be well with him*.[u] Piety is indeed fraught with beatitudes, every part thereof yieldeth peculiar blessedness. To the love of God, to charity toward our neighbour, to purity of heart, to meekness, to humility, to patience, to mercifulness, to peaceableness, beatitude is ascribed by our Lord, the great Judge and Dispenser of it.[v] Each religious performance hath happy fruits growing from it, and blissful rewards assigned thereto. All pious dispositions are fountains of pleasant streams, which by their confluence do make up a full sea of felicity.

IV. It is a peculiar advantage of piety, that it furnisheth employment fit for us, worthy of us, hugely grateful, and

* Si cui sua non videntur amplissima, licet totius mundi dominus sit, tamen miser est—*Sen. Ep.* 9.

[t] 1 Tim. vi. 6.

[u] Ps. cxxviii. 1, 2; cxii. 1.

[v] Matt. v.

highly beneficial to us. Man is a very busy and active creature, which cannot live and do nothing, whose thoughts are in restless motion, whose desires are ever stretching at somewhat, who perpetually will be working either good or evil to himself: wherefore greatly profitable must that thing be, which determineth him to act well, to spend his care and pain on that which is truly advantageous to him; and that is religion only. It alone fasteneth our thoughts, affections, and endeavours, upon occupations worthy the dignity of our nature, suiting the excellency of our natural capacities and endowments, tending to the perfection and advancement of our reason, to the enriching and ennobling of our souls. Secluding that, we have nothing in the world to study, to affect, to pursue, not very mean and below us, not very base and misbecoming us, as men of reason and judgment. What have we to do but to eat and drink, like horses or like swine; but to sport and play, like children or apes; but to bicker and scuffle about trifles and impertinences, like idiots? what, but to scrape or scramble for useless pelf; to hunt after empty shows and shadows of honour, or the vain fancies and dreams of men? what but to wallow or bask in sordid pleasures, the which soon degenerate into remorse and bitterness? To which sort of employments were a man confined, what a pitiful thing would he be, and how inconsiderable were his life! Were a man designed only, like a fly, to buzz about here for a time, sucking in the air, and licking the dew, then soon to vanish back into nothing, or to be transformed into worms; how sorry and despicable a thing were he! And such, without religion, we should be. But it supplieth us with business of a most worthy nature and lofty importance; it setteth us upon doing things great and noble as can be; it engageth us to free our minds from all fond conceits, and cleanse our hearts from all corrupt affections; to curb our brutish appetites, to tame our wild passions, to correct our perverse inclinations, to conform the dispositions of our soul and the actions of our life to the eternal laws of righteousness and goodness: it putteth us upon the imitation of God, and aiming at the resemblance of his perfection; upon obtaining a friendship and maintaining a correspondence with the High and Holy One; upon fitting our minds for conversation and society with the wisest and purest spirits above; upon providing for an immortal state, upon the acquist of joy and glory everlasting: it employeth us in the divinest actions, of promoting virtue, of performing beneficence, of serving the public, and doing good to all: the being exercised in which things doth indeed render a man highly considerable, and his life excellently valuable.

It is an employment mos tproper to us as reasonable men. For what more proper entertainments can our mind have, than to be purifying and beautifying itself, to be keeping itself and its subordinate faculties in order, to be attending upon the management of thoughts, of passions, of words, of actions depending upon its governance?

It is an employment most beneficial to us: in pursuing which, we greatly better ourselves, and improve our condition; we benefit and oblige others; we procure sound reputation and steady friendships; we decline many irksome mischiefs and annoyances; *we do* not, like those in the Prophet, *spend our labour for that which satisfieth not, nor spend our money for that which is not bread*:[x] for both temporal prosperity and eternal felicity are the wages of the labour which we take herein.

It is an employment most constant, never allowing sloth or listlessness to creep in, incessantly busying all our faculties with earnest contention; according to that profession of St. Paul, declaring the nature thereof, *Herein always do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.*[y] Whence it is called a *fight*, and a *race*, implying the continual earnestness of attention and activity, which is to be spent thereon.

It is withal a sweet and grateful business: for it is a pious man's character, that *he delighteth greatly in God's commandments*;[z] that *the commandments are not grievous to him*;[a] that it is *his meat and drink to do God's will*;[b] that *God's words* (or precepts) *are sweeter than*

[x] Isa. lv. 2.
[y] Acts xxiv. 16.
[z] Psal. cxii. 1.
[a] 1 John, v. 3.
[b] John iv. 34.

honey to his taste;[c] that *the ways of* religious *wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*[d] Whereas all other employments are wearisome, and soon become loathsome; this, the farther we proceed in it, the more pleasant and satisfactory it groweth.* There is perpetual matter of victory over bad inclinations pestering us within, and strong temptations assailing us without: which to combat hath much delight; to master, breedeth unexpressible content. The sense also of God's love, the influences of his grace and comfort communicated in the performances of devotion and all duty, the satisfaction of a good conscience, the assured hope of reward, the foretastes of future bliss, do season and sweeten all the labours taken, and all the difficulties undergone therein.

In fine, the bare light of nature hath discerned, that were it not for such matters as these to spend a man's care and pains upon, this would be a lamentable world to live in. There was, for instance, an emperor great and mighty as ever did wield sceptre upon earth, whose excellent virtue, coupled with wisdom (inferior, perhaps, to none that any man ever, without special inspiration, hath been endowed with), did qualify him with most advantage to examine and rightly to judge of things here; who, notwithstanding all the conveniences which his royal estate and well-settled prosperity might afford (the which surely he had fully tasted and tried), did yet thus express his thoughts: *Τί μοι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῷ; What doth it concern me to live in a world void of God, or void of Providence?*† To govern the greatest empire that ever was, in the deepest calm; to enjoy the largest affluences of wealth, of splendour, of respect, of pleasure; to be loved, to be dreaded, to be served, to be adored by so many nations; to have the whole civil world obsequious to his will and nod: all these things seemed vain and idle, not worthy of a man's regard, affection, or choice, in case there were no God to worship, no providence to observe, no piety to be exercised. So little worth the while common sense hath adjudged it to live without religion.

V. It is a considerable benefit of piety, that it affordeth the best friendships and sweetest society. Man is framed for society, and cannot live well without it: many of his faculties would be useless, many of his appetites would rest unsatisfied in solitude.* To have a friend wise and able, honest and good, unto whom upon all occasions we may have recourse for advice, for assistance, for consolation, is a great convenience of life: and this benefit we owe to religion, which supplieth us with various friendships of the best kind, most beneficial and most sweet unto us.†

It maketh God our friend, a friend infinitely better than all friends, most affectionate and kind, most faithful and sure, most able, most willing, and ever most ready to perform all friendly offices, to yield advice in all our doubts, succour in all our needs, comfort in all our troubles, satisfaction to all our desires. Unto him it ministereth a free address upon all occasions; with him it alloweth us continually a most sweat and pleasant intercourse. The pious man hath always the all-wise God to counsel him, to guide his actions and order his steps; he hath the Almighty to protect, support, and relieve him; he hath the immense Goodness to commiserate and comfort him: unto him he is not only encouraged, but obliged to resort in need; upon him he may, he ought to discharge all his cares and burdens.[e]

It consequently doth engage all creatures in the world to be our friends, or instruments of good to us, according to their several capacities, by the direction and disposal of God. All the servants of our great Friend will, in compliance to him, be serviceable to us: *Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee:*[f] so Job's friend promis-

* Non potest cuiquam semper idem placere, nisi rectum.—*Sen.* 20.

Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis juvarent.—*Quint.* i. 12.

† M. Ant. ii. 11; vi. 10.

[c] Psal. cxix. 103. [d] Prov. iii. 17.

* Nullius boni sine socio jucunda possessio est.—*Sen. Ep.* 6.

† Ut aliarum rerum nobis innata dulcedo est, sic amicitiæ.—*Sen. Ep.* 9.

[e] Prov. xii. 2; Psal. xxxiv. 15; xxxiii. 18; cxlv. 19; xxxvii. 28; Job xxxvi. 7.

[f] Job v. 23.

eth him, upon condition of piety. And God himself confirmeth that promise: *In that day*, saith he in the Prophet, *will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.*[g] And again, *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*[h] And, *The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*[i] *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot.*[k] *They shall take up scorpions, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them:*[l] (so our Lord promised to his disciples.) Not only the heavens shall dispense their kindly influences, and the earth yield her plentiful stores, and all the elements discharge their natural and ordinary good offices: nor only the tame and sociable creatures shall upon this condition faithfully serve us; but even the most wild, most fierce, most ravenous, most venomous creatures shall, if there be need, prove friendly and helpful, or at least harmless to us; as were the ravens to Elias, the lions to Daniel, the viper to St. Paul, the fire to the three children.[m]

But especially piety doth procure the friendship of the good angels, that puissant host of glorious and happy spirits:[n] they all do tenderly love the pious person; they are ever ready to serve and do him good, to protect him from danger, to aid him in his undertakings, to rescue him from mischiefs. What an honour, what a blessing is this, to have such an innumerable company of noble friends (the courtiers and favourites of heaven) deeply concerned and constantly vigilant for our welfare!

It also engageth the blessed saints in glory, *the spirits of just men perfected, the church of the first-born*, to bear dearest affections to us, to further our prosperity with their good wishes and earnest prayers, mightily prevalent with God.

[g] Hos. ii. 18. [h] Isa. xliii. 2.
[i] Psal. cxxi. 6. [k] Psal. xci. 13.
[l] Mark xvi. 18; Deut. xxviii. 12.
[m] 1 Kings xvii. 6. [n] Psal. xxxiv. 7; xci. 11; Heb. i. 14.

It rendereth all sorts of men our friends. To good men it uniteth us in holy communion; the communion of brotherly charity and hearty good-will, attended with all the good offices they are able to perform: to other men it reconcileth and endeareth us; for that innocent and inoffensive, courteous and benign, charitable and beneficent demeanour (such as piety doth require and produce), are apt to conciliate respect and affection from the worst men. For, *Vincit malos pertinax bonitas;** men hardly can persist enemies to him whom they perceive to be their friend: and such the pious man in disposition of mind, and in effect when occasion serveth, is toward all men;† being sensible of his obligation to love all men, and, *as he hath opportunity, to do good to all men.*[o] It assureth and more strictly endeareth our friends to us. For, as it maketh us hearty, faithful, constant friends to others, so it reciprocally tieth others to us in the like sincerity and fastness of good-will.‡

It reconcileth enemies. For, *when a man's ways do please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.*[p] It hath a natural efficacy to that purpose, and Divine blessing promoteth it.

By it all conversation becometh tolerable, grateful, and useful. For a pious man is not easily disturbed with any crossness or perverseness, any infirmity or impertinency of those he converseth with: he can bear the weaknesses and the failings of his company; he can by wholesome reflections upon all occurrences advantage and please himself.§

In fine, piety rendereth a man a true friend and a good companion to himself; satisfied in himself, able to converse freely and pleasantly with his own thoughts.‖ It is for the want of pious inclinations and dispositions, that solitude (a thing which sometimes cannot be avoided, which often should be embraced) is

* *Sen. de Benef.* vii. 21.

† Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse.—*Sen. Ep.* 6.

‡ Οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἡδεῖς ἀλλήλοις.—Arist. Eth. viii. 4.

§ Συνδιάγειν τε οὗτος ἑαυτῷ βούλεται· ἡδέως γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ. (Aristot. Eth. viii. 4.) τῶν τε γὰρ πεπραγμένων ἐπιτερπεῖς αἱ μνῆμαι, καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐλπίδες ἀγαθαί.

‖ Quæris quid profecerim? amicus esse mihi cœpi.—*Sen. Ep.* 6.

[o] Gal. vi. 10. [p] Prov. xvi. 7.

to most men so irksome and tedious, that men do carefully shun themselves, and fly from their own thoughts; that they decline all converse with their own souls, and hardly dare look upon their own hearts and consciences: whence they become aliens from home, wholly unacquainted with themselves, most ignorant of their own nearest concernments, no faithful friends or pleasant companions to themselves; so for refuge and ease they unseasonably run into idle or lewd conversation, where they disorder and defile themselves.* But the pious man is, like Scipio, *never less alone than when alone*:† his solitude and retirement is not only tolerable, but commonly the most grateful and fruitful part of his life: he can ever with much pleasure, and more advantage, converse with himself; digesting and marshalling his thoughts, his affections, his purposes, into good order; searching and discussing his heart; reflecting on his past ways, enforcing his former good resolutions, and framing new ones; inquiring after edifying truths; stretching his meditations toward the best and sublimest objects, raising his hopes and warming his affections towards spiritual and heavenly things; asking himself pertinent questions, and resolving incident doubts concerning his practice: in fine, conversing with his best Friend in devotion; with admiration and love contemplating the divine perfections displayed in the works of nature, of providence, of grace; praising God for his excellent benefits and mercies; confessing his defects and offences; deprecating wrath and imploring pardon, with grace and ability to amend; praying for the supply of all his wants.‡ All which performances yield both unconceivable benefit and unexpressible comfort. So that solitude (that which is to common nature so offensive, to corrupt nature so abominable) is to the pious man extremely commodious and comfortable: which is a great advantage peculiar to piety, and the last which I shall mention.

So many, and many more than I can express, vastly great and precious advantages do accrue from piety; so that well may we conclude with St. Paul, that *Godliness is profitable for all things.*

It remaineth that, if we be wise, we should, if we yet have it not ingraffed in us, labour to acquire it; if we have it, that we should endeavour to improve it, by constant exercise, to the praise of God, the good of our neighbour, and our own comfort. Which that we may effectually perform, Almighty God in mercy vouchsafe, by his grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

* Nemo est, cui non satius sit cum quolibet esse, quam secum.—*Sen. Ep.* 25.

Ἔνιοι τὸν ἴδιον βίον, ὡς ἀτερπίστατον ξέαμα, προσιδειν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, &c. Plut. περὶ Ηδυπρ, p. 916.

Ζητοῦσιν οἱ μοχθηροὶ μεθ' ὧν συνημερεύσουσιν, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ φεύγουσιν.—Arist. ix. 4.

† Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus.

‡ Acquiescit sibi, cogitationibus suis traditus. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

Sapiens nunquam solus esse potest, habet secum omnes qui sunt, quique unquam fuerunt boni; et animum liberum quocunque vult transfert; quod corpore non potest, cogitatione complectitur; et si hominum inops fuerit, loquitur cum Deo. Nunquam minus solus erit, quam cum solus fuerit.—*Hier. adv. Jovin.* i. 28.

SERMON IV.

THE REWARD OF HONOURING GOD.

1 Sam. ii. 30.—*For them that honour me I will honour.*

The words are in the strictest sense the word of God, uttered immediately by God himself; and may thence command from us an especial attention and regard. The history of that which occasioned them is, I presume, well known; neither shall I make any descant or reflection thereon; but to take the words separately, as a proposition of itself, affording a complete instruction and ample matter of discourse. And as such, they plainly imply two things: a duty required of us to *honour God;* and a reward proffered to us, upon performance of that duty, being *honoured by God.* It is natural for us, before we are willing to undertake any work, to consider the reward or benefit accruing from it; and it is necessary, before we can perform any duty, to understand the nature thereof. To this our method of action I shall suit the method of my discourse; first endeavouring to estimate the reward, then to explain the duty. Afterward I mean to

show briefly why in reason the duty is enjoined; how in effect the reward is conferred.

I. The reward may be considered either absolutely (as what it is in itself); or relatively (as to its rise, and whence it comes.)

1. For itself, it is honour; a thing, if valued according to the rate it bears in the common market, of highest price among all the objects of human desire; the chief reward which the greatest actions and which the best actions do pretend unto, or are capable of; that which usually bears most sway in the hearts, and hath strongest influence upon the lives of men; the desire of obtaining and maintaining which doth commonly overbear other most potent inclinations. The love of pleasure stoops thereto: for men, to get or keep reputation, will decline the most pleasant enjoyments, will embrace the hardest pains. Yea, it often prevails over the love of life itself, which men do not only frequently expose to danger, but sometimes devote to certain loss, for its sake. If we observe what is done in the world, we may discern it to be the source of most undertakings therein: that it not only moveth the wheels of public action (that not only for it great princes contend, great armies march, great battles are fought;) but that from it most private business derives its life and vigour: that for honour especially, the soldier undergoes hardship, toil, and hazard; the scholar plods and beats his brains; the merchant runs about so busily, and adventures so far; yea, that for its sake the meanest labourer and artificer doth spend his sweat and stretch his sinews. The principal drift of all this care and industry (the great reason of all this scuffling for power, this searching for knowledge, this scraping and scrambling for wealth) doth seem to be, that men would live in some credit, would raise themselves above contempt.*

In such request, of such force, doth honour appear to be. If we examine why, we may find more than mere fashion (or mutual imitation and consent) to ground the experiment upon. There is one obvious reason why no mean regard should be had thereto; its great convenience and usefulness: for that a man cannot himself live safely, quietly, or pleasantly, without some competent measure thereof; cannot well serve the public, perform offices of duty to his relations, of kindness to his friends, of charity to his neighbours, but under its protection, and with its aid: it being an engine very requisite for the managing any business, for the compassing any design, at least sweetly and smoothly; it procuring to us many furtherances in our proceedings, removing divers obstacles out of our way, guarding a man's person from offences, adding weight to his words, putting an edge upon his endeavours: for every one allows a favourable ear to his discourse, lends an assisting hand to his attempts, grants a ready credence to his testimony, and makes a fair construction of his doings, whom he esteems and respects. So is honour plainly valuable among the *bona utila*, as no small accommodation of life; and as such, reason approves it to our judgment.*

But searching farther, we shall find the appetite of honour to have a deeper ground, and that it is rooted even in our nature itself. For we may descry it budding forth in men's first infancy (before the use of reason, or speech;) even little children being ambitious to be made much of, maintaining among themselves petty emulations and competitions, as it were

* Ἴδοις δ' ἂν καὶ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τοὺς ἐπιεικεστάτους, ὑπὲρ ἄλλου μὲν οὐδενὸς ἂν τὸ ζῆν ἀντικαταλλαξαμένους· ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ τυχεῖν καλῆς δόξης, ἀποθνήσκειν ἑθελοντας.—Isocr. Orat. ad Philip.

Mors tum æquissimo animo appetitur, cum suis se laudibus vita occidens consolari potest. *Cic.* i. *Tusc.*

— Laudis avidi pecuniæ liberales erant, gloriam, ingentem divitias honestas volebant; hanc ardentissime dilexerunt, propter hanc vivere voluerunt, pro hac et mori non dubitaverunt. Cæteras cupiditates hujus unius ingenti cupiditate presserunt.—*Aug. de Civ. Dei*, v. 12.

Αἱ γὰρ δυναστεῖαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμὴν ἐστιν αἱρετά.—Arist. Eth. iv. 3.

Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad studia, gloria, &c.—*Cic. Tusc. Quæst.* 1.

* Vide *Hier. Ep. ad Celant.*

Conscientia nobis necessaria est, fama proxima. Qui conscientia fidens, famam negligit, crudelis est.—*Aug.*

Πρὸς Χρείας ἐπιτῆδειον ὄργανον ἡ δόξα.—Galen.

Nec vero negligenda fama est; nec mediocre telum ad res gerendas existimare oportet benevolentiam civium.—*Cic. de Amic.*

Vide *Chrys.* tom. vi. *Orat.* 17.

about punctilios of honour.* We may observe it growing with age, waxing bigger and stronger together with the increase of wit and knowledge, of civil culture and experience; that the maturest age doth most resent and relish it; that it prevails most in civilized nations; that men of the best parts, of the highest improvements, of the weightiest employments, do most zealously affect it and stand upon it; that they who most struggle with it, do most feel its might, how difficult it is to resist and restrain it, how impossible it is to stifle or extinguish it. For the philosopher, with all his reasons and considerations, cannot dispute it down, or persuade it away; the anchoret cannot, with all his austerities, starve it, or by his retirement shun it; no affliction, no poverty, no wretchedness of condition, can totally suppress it. It is a spirit that not only haunts our courts and palaces, but frequents our schools and cloisters; yea, creeps into cottages, into hospitals, into prisons, and even dogs men into deserts and solitudes; so close it sticks to our nature.† Plato saith, it is the last coat which a wise man doth put off. But I question whether he could show us that wise man who had done it, or could tell us where he dwelt, except perhaps in his own Utopian republic. For they who most pretend to have done it (who in their discourse most vilify honour; who talk like Chrysippus, that a wise man for reputation sake will not so much as stretch out his finger;‡ or like Seneca, that we should do every thing purely for concience sake, without any regard to men's opinions; who make harangues and write volumes against glory)§ do yet appear by their practice, sometimes, by so doing, to aim at it: even as men do usually complain of and eagerly quarrel with that which they most affect and woo. Chrysippus wrote, as we are told, above 700 books,‖ most of them concerning logical quirks, and such as one can hardly imagine what other drift he could have in composing them, besides ostentation of his subtilty and sharpness of wit. Seneca, if history do not wrong him, and the face of his actions do not misrepresent him, was not in his heart exempt from a spice of ambition. Yea, that excellent emperor M. Aurelius, who would often speak like a Stoic, could not but commonly act like a man; more by his practice commending honour, than he disparaged it in his words. For story represents him very careful and jealous of his credit, very diligent to preserve it and to repair it.* Tertullian calls such philosophers *negotiatores famæ*, merchants for fame:† and it is perchance some part of their cunning in that trade, which makes them strive to beat down the price of this commodity, that they may more easily engross it to themselves. However, experience proves that such words are but words (words spoken out of affectation and pretence, rather than in good earnest and according to truth;) that endeavours to banish or to extirpate this desire are but fond and fruitless attempts. The reason why is clear: for it is as if one should dispute against eating and drinking, or should labour to free himself from hunger and thirst: the appetite of honour being indeed, as that of food, innate unto us, so as not to be quenched or smothered, except by some violent distemper or indisposition of mind:‡ even by the wise Author of our nature originally implanted therein, for very good ends and uses, respecting both the private and public benefit of men; as an engagement to virtue, and a restraint from vice, as an excitement of industry, an incentive of courage, a support of constancy in the prosecution of worthy enterprises; as a serviceable instrument for the constitution, conservation, and improvement of human society. For did not some love of honour glow in men's breasts, were that noble spark quite extinct, few men probably would study for honourable quali-

* Vidi ego et expertus sum zelantem parvulum, &c.—*Aug.*

† In solitudine sitis subrepit superbia.—*Hier.*

‡ *Cic. de Fin.* 3.

§ Nihil opinionis causa, omnia conscientiæ faciam.—*Sen. de V. B.*

Nil sit illi cum ambitione famaque commune, sibi placeat.—*Epist.* 113.

Justum esse gratis oportet.—*Ib.*

Id. de Ira, iii. 41.

‖ Laert.

* Erat famæ suæ curiosissimus, et male loquentium dictis vel literis vel sermone respondebat.—*Capit.*

† Tert. Apol.

‡ Ut quidam morbo aliquo et sensus stupore suavitatem cibi non sentiunt; sic libidinosi, avari, facinorosi veræ laudis gustum non habent.—*Cic. Philipp.* 2.

ties, or perform laudable deeds; there would be nothing to keep some men within bounds of modesty and decency, to deter them from doing odious and ugly things: men, not caring what others thought of them, would not regard what they did themselves;* a barbarous sloth, or brutish stupidity, would overspread the world, withdrawing from common life most of its ornaments, much of its convenience; men generally would, if not altogether shun society, yet at least decline the cares and burdens requisite to the promoting its welfare, for the sustaining which, usually the chief encouragement, the main recompense, is this of honour. That men, therefore, have so tender and delicate a sense of their reputation (so that touching it is like pricking a nerve, as soon felt, and as smartly offensive), is an excellent provision in nature; in regard whereto honour may pass among the *bona naturalia*, as a good necessary for the satisfaction of nature, and for securing the accomplishment of its best designs.

A moderate regard to honour is also commendable as an instance of humanity or good will to men, yea, as an argument of humility, or a sober conceit of ourselves.† For to desire another man's esteem, and consequently his love (which in some kind or degree is an inseparable companion of esteem,) doth imply somewhat of reciprocal esteem and affection toward him; and to prize the judgment of other men concerning us, doth signify, that we are not over satisfied with our own.

We might, for its farther commendation, allege the authority of the more cool and candid sort of philosophers (such as grounded their judgment of things upon notions agreeable to common sense and experience; who adapted their rules of practice to the nature of man, such as they found it in the world, not such as they framed it in their own fancies,) who have ranked honour among the principle of things desirable, and adorned it with fairest elogies; terming it a divine thing, the best of exterior goods, the most honest fruit and most ample reward of true virtue; adjudging, that to neglect the opinions of men (especially of persons worthy and laudable) is a sign of stupid baseness, that to contemn them is an effect of unreasonable haughtiness; representing the love of honour (rightly grounded and duly moderated) not only as the parent and guardian (as productive and preservative) of other virtues, but as a virtue itself, of no small magnitude and lustre in the constellation of virtues, the virtue of generosity.* A virtue, which, next to the spirit of true religion (next to a hearty reverence toward the supreme blessed Goodness, and that holy charity toward men, which springeth thence,) doth lift a man up nearest to heaven; doth raise his mind above the sordid desires, the sorry cares, the fond humours, the perverse and froward passions, with which men commonly are possessed and acted: that virtue, which inflames a man with courage, so that he dares perform what reason and duty require of him, that he disdains to do what is bad or base; which inspires him with sincerity, that he values his honesty before all other interests and respects, that he abhors to wrong or deceive, to flatter or abuse any man, that he cannot endure to seem otherwise than he is, to speak otherwise than he means, to act otherwise than he promises and professes; which endows him with courtesy, that he is ready to yield every man his due respect, to afford any man what help and succour he is able; that virtue, which renders a man upright in all his dealings, and correspondent to all his obligations; a loyal subject to his prince, and a true lover of his country, a candid judge of persons and things, an earnest favourer of whatever is good and commendable, a faithful and hearty friend, a beneficial and useful neighbour, a grateful resenter and requiter of courtesies, hospitable to the

* Αἰδώς δ' οἰχομένη πάντων γενέτειρα κακίστον.—Naz. Carm. 56.

† Negligere quid de se quisque sentiat arrogantis est et dissoluti.—*Cic. de Offic.* 1.

* Θεῖόν τι ἡ τιμή.—Plat. de Leg. iv.

Καλὸν ταῖς πολλαῖς πόλεσι τὸ παρακέλευσμά ἐστι, προτιμᾶν εὐδοξίαν πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν.—Idem de Rep. xii.

Μέγιστον τῶν ἐκτος ἀγαθῶν ἡ τιμή.—Arist. Eth. iv. 3.

Levis est animi, justam gloriam, qui est fructus virtutis honestissimus, repudiare.—*Cic. in Pis.*

Ex omnibus præmiis virtutis amplissimum est præmium gloria.—*Idem pro Mil.*

stranger, bountiful to the poor, kind and good to all the world: that virtue, in fine, which constitutes a man of honour, who surely is the best man next to a man of conscience. Thus may honour be valued from natural light, and according to common sense.*

But beyond all this, the holy Scripture (that most certain standard, by which we may examine and determine the true worth of things) doth not teach us to slight honour, but rather in its fit order and just measure to love and prize it. It indeed instructs us to ground it well (not upon bad qualities or wicked deeds, that is villainous madness; not upon things of a mean and indifferent nature, that is vanity; not upon counterfeit shows and pretences, that is hypocrisy; but upon real worth and goodness, that may consist with modesty and sobriety:) it enjoins us not to be immoderate in our desires thereof, or complacences therein, not to be irregular in the pursuit or acquist of it (to be so is pride and ambition;) but to affect it calmly, to purchase it fairly: it directs us not to make a regard thereto our chief principle, not to propound it as our main end of action: it charges us to bear contentedly the want or loss thereof (as of other temporal goods;) yea, in some cases, for conscience sake, or for God's service (that is, for a good incomparably better than it,) it obliges us willingly to prostitute and sacrifice it, choosing rather to be infamous than impious, (to be in disgrace with men, rather than in disfavour with God:)† it, in fine, commands us to seek and embrace it only in subordination and with final reference to God's honour. Which distinctions and cautions being provided, honour is represented in holy Scripture as a thing considerably good, which may be regarded without blame, which sometimes in duty must be regarded. It is there preferred before other good things, in themselves not despicable. For, *A good name is better than precious ointment;* yea, *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches*, saith the Wise Man.[q] It is called a gift of God: For, *There is a man*, saith the Preacher, *to whom God hath given riches and honour.*[r] Yea, not only a simple gift, but a blessing, conferred in kindness, as a reward and encouragement of goodness: for, *By humility and the fear of the Lord*, saith he again, *are riches and honour.*[s] Whence it is to be acknowledged as an especial benefit, and a fit ground of thanksgiving; as is practised by the Psalmist in his royal hymn: *Honour* (saith he) *and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*[t] Wisdom also is described unto us bearing *in her left hand riches and honour:*[u] and Wisdom surely will not take into any hand of hers, or hold therein, what is worth nothing. No: we are therefore moved to procure her, because, *exalting her, she shall promote us. She shall give unto our head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to us.*[v] We are also enjoined to render honour as the best expression of good-will and gratitude toward them who best deserve in themselves, or most deserve of us; to our prince, to our parents, to our priests, especially to such of them *as govern and teach well*, to all good men (*Have such in reputation*, says the Apostle.)[x] And were not honour a good thing, such injunctions would be unreasonable. Yea, because we are obliged to bear good-will toward all men, St. Peter bids us to *honour all men.*[y] From hence also, that we are especially bound to render honour unto God himself, we may well infer with Aristotle, that *honour is the best thing in our power to offer.*[z] To these considerations may be added, that we are commanded to walk εὐσχημόνως (*decently*, or speciously, which implies a regard to men's opinion;) to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*[a] (τὰ καλὰ, that is, not only things good in substance, but goodly in appearance;) to *have our conversation honest before the Gentiles*[b] (καλὴν again, that is, fair, or comely, and plausible, such as may commend us and

* Trahimur omnes laudis studio, et optimus quisque maxime gloria ducitur.—*Cic. pro Arch.*
Οἱ χαρίεντες καὶ πρακτικοὶ, plausible and active men do, saith Aristotle, place happiness in honour.—*Eth.* i. 4.

† Non vis esse justus sine gloria? a mehercule sæpe justus esse debes cum infamia.—*Sen. Epist.* cxiii.

[q] Eccles. vii. 1: Prov. xxii. 1.
[r] Eccles. vi. 2.
[s] Prov. xxii. 4.
[t] Psal. xxi. 5.
[u] Prov. iii. 16.
[v] Prov. iv. 8, 9.
[x] 1 Pet. ii. 17; 1 Tim. v. 3, 17; Phil. ii. 29.
[y] 1 Pet. ii. 17.
[z] Aristot. Eth. iv. 3.
[a] Rom. xiii. 13; xii. 17.
[b] 1 Pet. ii. 12.

our profession to the judgment of them who observe us.) St. Paul also exhorts us to *mind*, not only *what things are true, are just, are pure;* but also ὅσα σεμνὰ (*whatever things are venerable*, or apt to beget respect,) ὅσα προσφιλῆ (*whatever things are lovely*, or gracious in men's eyes and esteem,) ὅσα εὔφημα (*whatever things are well reported, or well reputed of.*) He requires us not only, *if there be any virtue* (any thing very good in itself,) but, *if there be any praise* (any thing much approved in common esteem,) that we should *mind such things.*[c] Lastly, the blessed state hereafter (the highest instance of divine bounty, the complete reward of goodness) is represented and recommended to us as a state of honour and glory; to be ambitious whereof is the character of a good man. *To every man*, saith St. Paul, *shall God render according to his works: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.*[d]

Such is the reward propounded to us in itself; no vile or contemptible thing, but upon various accounts much valuable; that which the common apprehensions of men, plain dictates of reason, a predominant instinct of nature, the judgments of very wise men, and divine attestation itself, conspire to commend unto us as very considerable and precious. Such a reward our text prescribes us the certain, the only way of attaining.

2. Such a benefit is here tendered to us (that which yet more highly commends it, and exceedingly enhances its worth) by God himself: *I*, saith he *will honour.* It is sanctified by coming from his holy hand; it is dignified by following his most wise and just disposal; it is fortified and assured by depending on his unquestionable word, and uncontrollable power: who, as he is the prime Author of all good, so he is in especial manner the sovereign dispenser of honour. *The king*, we say, *is the fountain of honour.* What any king, as the representative and delegate of God, is in his particular kingdom, that is almighty God absolutely and independently in all the world. *Both riches and honour*, said good king David, *come of thee, for thou rulest over all: in thine hand is power and might; in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*[e] He whose grants are in effect only sure and valid, whose favours only do in the end turn to good account, he freely offers us most desirable preferment: he doth himself graciously hold forth most authentic patents, by virtue of which we may all become *right honourable*, and *persons of quality indeed;* having not only the names and titles, the outward ensigns and badges of dignity (such as earthly princes confer,) but the substantial reality, the assured enjoyment thereof. (For man can only impose law upon tongues and gestures; God alone commandeth and inclineth hearts, wherein honour chiefly resideth.) He offers it, I say, most freely indeed, yet not absolutely: he doth not go to sell it for a price, yet he propounds it under a condition; as a most just and equal, so a very gentle and easy condition. It is but an exchange of honour for honour; of honour from God, which is a free gift, for honour from us, which is a just duty; of honour from him our sovereign Lord, for honour from us his poor vassals; of honour from the most high Majesty of heaven, for honour from us vile worms, creeping upon the earth. Such an overture one would think it not only reasonable to accept, but impossible to refuse. For can any man dare not to honour invincible power, infallible wisdom, inflexible justice? will any man forbear to honour immense goodness and bounty? Yes, it seems there are men so mad as to reject so fair an offer; so bad as to neglect so equal a duty. Let us therefore consider what it is that is here required of us, or wherein this honouring of God consists, that we may thereby discern when we perform this duty, when we are deficient therein.

II. There are several ways of honouring God, or several parts and degrees of this duty; all which we may refer to two sorts, conceiving the duty as a compound, made up of two main ingredients (correspondent to those two parts in which they reside, and of which our nature consists; which distinction St. Paul suggesteth, when he saith, *Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are*

[c] Phil. iv. 8. [d] Rom. ii. 6, 7. [e] 1 Chron. xxix. 12.

God's,)[r] one of them being, as it were, the form and soul, the other as the matter and body of the duty.

1. The soul of that honour which is required of us toward God, is that internal esteem and reverence which we should bear in our hearts towards him; importing that we have impressed upon our minds such conceptions about him as are worthy of him, suitable to the perfection of his nature, to the eminency of his state, to the just quality of his works and actions; that we apprehend him to be, what he really is in his nature, superlatively good, wise, powerful, holy, and just: that we ascribe unto him the production and conservation of all beings together with an entire superintendency over, and absolute disposal of, all events: that we conceive ourselves obliged to submit unto, and acquiesce in, all his dispensations of providence, as most wise and most righteous; to rely upon the declarations of his mind (whether in way of assertion, or promise,) as infallibly true and certain. In such acts of mind the honouring of God doth primarily consist. In acts, I say: not in speculative opinions concerning the divine excellences (such as all men have, who are not downright atheists or infidels, floating in the fancy, or dormant in the mind;) but in continually present, lively, effectual acts of apprehension and judgment, sinking down into the heart and affections, and quickening them to a congruous, real performance. Such an apprehension of God's power, as shall make us to dread his irresistible hand, shall cause us to despair of prospering in bad courses, shall dispose us to confide in him, as able to perform whatever he wills us to expect from him: such an opinion of his wisdom, as shall keep us from questioning whether that is best which God declares to be so; as shall hinder us from presuming (in compliance with our own shallow reason, or vain fancy) to do anything against God's judgment and advice: such a conceit of God's justice, as shall render us careful to perform what his law promises to reward, and fearful to commit what it threatens to punish: such a persuasion concerning God's goodness, as shall kindle in us an hearty affection toward him, shall make us very sensible of his bounty, and ready to yield returns of duty and gratitude unto him; as shall preserve us from being distrustful of his providence, or doubtful in our need and distress of finding relief from him: such a vigorous and fruitful esteem of God in all respects, as shall produce in us dispositions of mind, and actions of life, agreeable to our various relations and obligations to him; becoming us as his creatures and children, as his subjects and servants. This is indeed the soul of the duty, which being absent, all exterior (how spacious soever) either professions or performances, are but as pictures, having in them somewhat of resemblance in shape and colour, nothing of life: yea rather, as carcasses, not only dead and senseless, but rotten and filthy in God's sight. *This people*, saith God, *do honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*[s] Such honour is indeed no honour at all, but impudent abuse and profane mockery: for what can be more abominably vain, than for a man to court and cajole him who knows his whole heart, who sees that he either minds not, or means not what he says? It behoves us, therefore, by all proper means, by contemplating the works and actions of God (his admirable works of nature, the wise proceedings of his providence, the glorious dispensations of his grace,) by meditating on his word, by praying for his grace, by observing his law and will, to raise up in our hearts, to foment and cherish this internal reverence, which is the true spring of all piety, the principle which forms and actuates that other sort, coming next to be touched on, being the body of our due honour to God; concurring in its order to the integrity thereof, as without which the interior part would be a kind of ghost, too thin in substance, too remote from sense, too destitute of good fruit and use.

2. This bodily part consists in outward expressions and performances, whereby we declare our esteem and reverence of God, and produce or promote the like in others. For our thus honouring God respects those two ends and effects, the uttering our own, the exciting in others a reverence toward him. And it we may

[r] 1 Cor. vi. 20.

[s] Matt. xv. 8.

first view in the general, or gross bulk thereof; then survey its principal members.

First, in general, God is honoured by a willing and careful practice of all piety and virtue for conscience sake, or in avowed obedience to his holy will. This is the most natural expression of our reverence toward him, and the most effectual way of promoting the same in others. A subject cannot better demonstrate the reverence he bears toward his prince, than by (with a cheerful diligence) observing his laws; for by so doing he declares that he acknowledgeth the authority, and revereth the majesty, which enacted them; that he approves the wisdom which devised them, and the goodness which designed them for public benefit; that he dreads his prince's power, which can maintain them, and his justice, which will vindicate them; that he relies upon his fidelity, in making good what of protection or of recompense he propounds to the observers of them. No less pregnant a signification of our reverence toward God do we yield in our gladly and strictly obeying his laws; thereby evidencing our submission to God's sovereign authority, our esteem of his wisdom and goodness, our awful regard to his power and justice, our confidence in him, and dependence upon his word. As also the practice of wholesome laws, visibly producing good fruits (peace and prosperity in the commonwealth,) doth conciliate respect unto the prince, he thereby appearing wise and good, able to discern, and willing to choose what confers to public benefit: so actions conformable to the divine law, being (by God's wise and gracious disposal) both in themselves comely and lovely, and in effect, as St. Paul saith, *good and profitable to men*,[h] conducing indeed not only to private, but also to public welfare, to the rendering human society comfortable, to the settling and securing common tranquillity, the performance of them must needs bring great commendation to the author and ordainer of them. By observing them we shall, as St. Peter speaks, *set forth the virtues of him that called us* to such a practice.[i] The light and lustre of good works, done in regard to divine command, will cause men to see clearly the excellences of our most wise and gracious Lord; will consequently induce and excite them *to glorify our Father which is in heaven*.[k] *Is this*, saith our Saviour, *is my Father glorified if you bear much fruit*.[l] The goodliness to the sight, the pleasantness to the taste, which is ever perceptible in those fruits which genuine piety beareth, the beauty men see in a calm mind and a sober conversation, the sweetness they taste from works of justice and charity, will certainly produce veneration to the doctrine which teacheth such things, and to the authority which enjoins them. It is an aggravation of impiety often insisted upon in Scripture, that it slurs, as it were, and defames God, brings reproach and obloquy upon him, causes his name to be profaned, to be cursed, to be blasphemed:[m] and it is answerably a commendation of piety, that by the practice thereof we (not only procure many great advantages to ourselves, many blessings and comforts here, all joys and felicities hereafter; but do also thereby) beget esteem to God himself, and sanctify his ever-blessed name; cause him to be regarded and reverenced, his name to be praised and blessed among men.[n] It is by exemplary piety, *by providing things honest in the sight of all men*,[o] by doing things honourable and laudable (such are all things which God hath been pleased to command us), that we shall be sure to fulfil that precept of St. Paul, of *doing all things to the glory of God*;[p] which is the body of that duty we speak of.

Secondly, But there are, deserving a particular inspection, some members thereof, which in a peculiar and eminent manner do constitute this honour; some acts which more signally conduce to the illustration of God's glory. Such are,

1. The frequent and constant performance (in a serious and reverent manner) of all religious duties, or devotions immediately addressed to God, or conversant about him: that which the Psalmist

[h] Tit. iii. 8; Neh. ix. 13; Deut. x. 13.
[i] 1 Pet. ii. 9.
[k] Matt. v. 16.
[l] John xv. 8.
[m] Rom. ii. 23; Tit. ii. 5; 2 Samuel xii. 14; Isa. lii. 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 20.
[n] Eph. iv. 1; Phil. i. 27; Col. i. 10; 1 Thess. ii. 12.
[o] Rom. xii. 17.
[p] 1 Cor. x. 31.

styles, *Giving the Lord the honour due to his name, worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*[q]

2. Using all things peculiarly related unto God, his holy name, his holy word, his holy places (the places *where his honour dwelleth*,) his holy times (religious fasts and festivities,) with especial respect.[r]

3. Yielding due observance to the deputies and ministers of God (both civil and ecclesiastical) as such, or because of their relation to God: the doing of which God declares that he interprets and accepts as done unto himself.[s]

4. Freely spending what God hath given us (out of respect unto him) in works of piety, charity, and mercy; that which the Wise Man calls, *honouring the Lord with our substance.*[t]

5. All penitential acts, by which we submit unto God, and humble ourselves before him. As Achan, by confessing of his sin, is said to *give glory to the Lord God of Israel.*[u]

6. Cheerful undergoing afflictions, losses, disgraces, for the profession of God's truth, or for obedience to God's commands. (As St. Peter is said *by his death*, suffered upon such accounts *to glorify God.*)[v]

These signal instances of this duty (represented as such in holy Scripture) for brevity's sake I pass over; craving leave only to consider one, most pertinent to our present business, and indeed a very comprehensive one; which is this:—

7. We shall especially honour God, by discharging faithfully those offices which God hath entrusted us with; by improving diligently those talents which God hath committed to us; by using carefully those means and opportunities which God hath vouchsafed us, of doing him service, and promoting his glory. Thus he to whom God hath given wealth, if he expend it (not to the nourishment of pride and luxury, not only to the gratifying his own pleasure or humour, but) to the furtherance of God's honour, or to the succour of his indigent neighbour (in any pious or charitable way,) he doth thereby in especial manner honour God. He also on whom God hath bestowed wit and parts, if he employ them (not so much in contriving projects to advance his own petty interests, or in procuring vain applause to himself, as) in advantageously setting forth God's praise, handsomely recommending goodness, dexterously engaging men in ways of virtue (doing which things is true wit and excellent policy indeed,) he doth thereby remarkably honour God. He likewise that hath honour conferred upon him, if he subordinate it to God's honour, if he use his own credit as an instrument of bringing credit to goodness, thereby adorning and illustrating piety, he by so doing doth eminently practice this duty. The like may be said of any other good quality, any capacity or advantage of doing good; by the right use thereof we honour God: for that men, beholding the worth of such good gifts, and feeling the benefit emerging from them, will be apt to bless the donor of them; as did they in the Gospel, who seeing our Saviour cure the paralytic man, did presently *glorify God, who had given such power unto men.*[w] But especially they to whom power and authority is committed, as they have the chief capacity, so they are under an especial obligation thus to honour God: they are particularly concerned to hear and observe that royal proclamation, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name.*[w] When such persons (like King Nebuchadnezzar returned to his right senses[x]) do seriously acknowledge their power and eminency derived from God alone; when they profess subjection unto him, and express it in their practice, not only driving others by their power, but drawing them by their example, to piety and goodness; when they cause God's name to be duly worshipped, and his laws to be strictly observed; when they favour and encourage virtue, discourage and chastise wickedness; when they take care that justice be impartially administered, innocence protected, necessity

[q] Psal. xxix. 2. [r] Psal. xxvi. 8; Isa. lvii. 13.
[s] Rom. xiii. 4; Mal. ii. 7; 1 Sam. viii. 7; Matt. x. 40; John xiii. 20.
[t] 2 Cor. ix. 13; Prov. iii. 9; xiv. 31.
[u] Josh. vii. 19; Apoc. xvi 9.
[v] John xxi. 19.
[w] Matt. ix. 8. [w] Psal. xxix. 1, 2.
[x] Dan. iv. 34, I blessed the most High, and praised and honoured him, &c.

relieved, all iniquity and oppression, all violence and disorder, yea, so much as may be, all affliction and wretchedness be prevented, or removed; when they by all means strive to promote both the service of God, and the happiness of men (*dispensing* equally and benignly to the family over which their Lord hath set them, *their meat in due season*;[y] providing that men under them *may live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty*;[z] doing which is the business allotted to them, the interest, as it were, of God, which he declares himself concernedly to tender, and by their ministry to prosecute;) when they carefully do such things, then do they indeed approve themselves worthy honourers of their high Master and heavenly King; then do they truly act God's part, and represent his person decently. When the actions of these visible gods are so divinely good and beneficial, men will be easily induced, yea, can hardly forbear to reverence and magnify the invisible Founder of their authority. By so doing, as they will set before men's eyes the best pattern of loyalty: as they will impress upon men's hearts the strongest argument for obedience and respect towards themselves; as they shall both more plainly inform and more effectually persuade people to the performance of their duty unto them, than by all the law and all the force in the world; as they will thereby consequently best secure and maintain their own honour, and their own welfare (for men will never be heartily loyal and submissive to authority, till they become really good; nor will they ever be very good, till they see their leaders such;) so they will together greatly advance the praise and glory of him in whose name they rule, to whose favour they owe their power and dignity; *in whose hand*, as the Prophet saith, *is their breath, and whose are all their ways*.[a] For all men will be ready most awfully to dread him, unto whom they see princes themselves humbly to stoop and bow; no man will be ashamed or unwilling to serve him, whom he shall observe that his lords and governors do concern themselves to worship: the world cannot but have a good opinion of him, a participation of whose power and majesty yields such excellent fruits; it will not fail to adore him, whose shadows and images are so venerable. It is a most notorious thing, both to reason and in experience, what extreme advantage great persons have, especially by the influence of their practice, to bring God himself, as it were, into credit: how much it is in their power easily to render piety a thing in fashion and request. For in what they do, they never are alone, or are ill attended; whither they go, they carry the world along with them: they lead crowds of people after them, as well when they go in the right way, as when they run astray. The custom of living well, no less than other modes and garbs, will be soon conveyed and propagated from the court; the city and country will readily draw good manners thence (good manners truly so called; not only superficial forms of civility, but real practices of goodness.) For the main body of men goeth not *qua eundum, sed qua itur*; not according to rules and reasons, but after examples and authorities; especially of great persons, who are like stars, shining in high and conspicuous places, by which men steer their course: their actions are to be reckoned not as single or solitary ones, but are, like their persons, of a public and representative nature, involving the practice of others, who are by them awed, or shamed into compliance. Their good example especially hath this advantage, that men can find no excuse, can have no pretence why they should not follow it. Piety is not only beautified, but fortified by their dignity; it not only shines in them with a clearer lustre, but with a mightier force and influence: a word, a look (the least intimation) from them will do more good, than others' best eloquence, clearest reason, most earnest endeavours. For it is in them, if they would apply themselves to it, as the wisest prince implies, to *scatter iniquity with their eyes*.[b] A smile of theirs were able to enliven virtue, and diffuse it all about; a frown might suffice to mortify and dissipate wickedness. Such apparently is their power of honouring God; and in proportion thereto, surely great is their obligation to do it: of them peculiarly

[y] Matt. xxiv. 45. [z] 1 Tim. ii. 2.
[a] Dan. v. 23.

[b] Prov. xx. 8.

God expects it, and all equity exacts it. What the meaner rank of servants (who are employed in baser drudgeries, whose fare is more coarse, whose wages are more scant, who stand at a greater distance from their lord, and receive no such ample or express marks of his favour, what these) do is of some consequence indeed, but doth not import so much to the master's reputation; their good word concerning him, their good carriage toward him, doth not credit him so much. But those whom he employs in matters of highest trust and importance to his affairs, whom he places in the nearest degree to himself (seats even in his own throne, upon his own tribunal,) whom he feeds plentifully and daintily, maintains in a handsome garb, allows largely; as their deportment doth much reflect on their lord's esteem, as they are highly capable of advancing his repute; so all the rules of ingenuity and gratitude, all the laws of justice and equity, do oblige them earnestly to endeavour it. And it is indeed no less their concernment to do so. For if there be disorders, prejudicial to the master's honour and interest, frequently committed in the family, it is those servants must be responsible: if due order be there kept to his glory and advantage, they shall chiefly be commended, and peculiarly hear the *Euge, bone serve.*[c] They must be loaded with other men's faults, or crowned for other men's virtues, as their behaviour hath respectively contributed to them. Those universal rules of equity, proposed in the Gospel, will, in God's reckoning with and requiting men, be punctually observed: *to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required:*[d] answerable to the improvement of what is delivered in trust shall the acceptance be.

I have insisted somewhat more largely on this point, because our text hath a particular aspect thereon; the words being uttered upon occasion of Eli, then judge in Israel, his not using authority to these purposes; his forbearing to redress a grievous abuse, committed by his own sons, to the disservice and dishonour of God. Whence to persons of his rank is this law especially directed; upon them is this duty chiefly incumbent; on them assuredly (as sure as God is true,) if they will observe the duty, the reward shall be conferred. God will certainly not only preserve the honour they have already, but will accumulate more honours on them.

These are general truths; the particular application of them is ours. God, I pray, vouchsafe his grace and blessing, that it may be made to our benefit and comfort.

III. I should now show why the duty is required of us, or how reasonable it is. I must not (and the matter is so palpable that I need not) spend many words on that. God surely doth not exact honour from us because he needs it, because he is the better for it, because he, for itself, delights therein. For (beside that he cannot want anything without himself, that he cannot any wise need mortal breath to praise him,* or hands of flesh to serve him, who hath millions of better creatures than we absolutely at his devotion, and can with a word create millions of millions more, fitter than we to honour him) the best estimation we can have of him is much below him; the best expression we can make is very unworthy of him. He is infinitely excellent, beyond what we can imagine or declare: his *name is exalted above all blessing and praise; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*[e] So that all our endeavours to honour him are, in comparison to what is due, but defects, and in a manner disparagements to him. It is only then (which should effect our ingenuity to consider) his pure goodness that moves him, for our benefit and advantage, to demand it of us.

1. For that to honour God is the most proper work of reason; that for which primarily we were designed and framed (for as other things were made to afford the matter and occasion, so man was designed to exercise the act of glorifying God:)[f] whence the performance thereof doth preserve and perfect our nature; to neglect it being unnatural and monstrous.

2. For that also it is a most pleasant

[c] Matt. xxv. 23. [d] Luke xii. 48.

* Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀνενδεὴς οὖσα, οὐδενὸς ἑτέρου προσδεῖται οἱ δὲ αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν λαμπρότεροι γίνονται.—Chrysost. in Psal. cxliv., *et vide* in Psal. ciii.

[e] Neh. ix. 5; Psal. cxlviii. 13; Ecclus. xliii. 30. [f] Sen. Ep. 76.

duty. He is not a man (hath lost all natural ingenuity and humanity) who doth not delight to make some returns thither, where he hath found much good-will, whence he hath felt great kindness. Since, then, all the good we have, we have received from God's favour, it cannot but be very pleasant to render somewhat of requital, as it were, unto him; and we can render no other but this. We cannot make God more rich, more joyful, more happy than he is: all that we can do is, to express our reverence toward him.

3. For that likewise our honouring God disposes us to the imitation of him (for what we do reverence we would resemble;) that is, to the doing those things wherein our chief perfection and happiness consists, whence our best content and joy doth spring.

4. In fine, for that the practice of this duty is most profitable and beneficial to us: unto it, by an eternal rule of justice, our final welfare and prosperity being annexed; whence God hath declared it to be the way and condition of our attaining that thing which we so like and prize, honour to ourselves; which by promise he hath engaged himself to confer on those who honour him. And,

IV. This promise he makes good several ways: some of them I shall briefly suggest.

1. The honouring God is of itself an honourable thing; the employment which ennobles heaven itself, wherein the highest angels do rejoice and glory. It is the greatest honour of a servant to bring credit to his master, of a subject to spread his prince's renown, and (upon grounds vastly more obliging) of a creature to glorify his maker: that we may do so is an honour we should be glad, may be proud of.

2. By honouring God we are immediately instated in great honour; we enter into most noble relations, acquire most illustrious titles, enjoy most glorious privileges; we become the friends and favourites of heaven, are adopted into God's family, and are styled his children; do obtain a free access unto him, a sure protection under him, a ready assistance from him in all our needs. And what honour can expect, can equal this?

3. God hath so ordered it, that honour is naturally consequent upon the honouring him. God hath made goodness a noble and a stately thing; hath impressed upon it that beauty and majesty which commands an universal love and veneration, which strikes presently both a kindly and an awful respect into the minds of all men. *The righteous is* (not only in himself but in common esteem) *more excellent than his neighbour.*[g] Power may be dreaded, riches may be courted, wit and knowledge may be admired; but only goodness is truly esteemed and honoured.* Not only men of goodness and discretion but even the vulgar sort of men (yea, as Plato hath well observed, the worst men) do pass this judgment, do prefer true goodness above all things.†

4. God, by his extraordinary providence, as there is reason and occasion, doth interpose, so as to procure honour to them, to maintain and further their reputation, who honour him. God *fashioneth the hearts of men: the hearts* of the greatest men *are in his hand; he turneth them as the rivers of waters, whithersoever he will*:[h] he consequently raiseth or depresseth us, as he pleases, in the judgments and affections of men. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,*[i] saith the Wise Man; that is, he disposeth the most averse minds to love and honour him. No envy can supplant, no slander can deface the credit of such a person; since God hath taken it into his charge and care, since he hath said it, that *he will bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.*[k] God also, by secret methods, and undiscernable trains, ordereth all events, managing our thoughts and designs, our enterprises and actions, so that the result

* Γίνου τοῦ πλησίον τιμιώτερος ἐκ τοῦ φανῆναι χρηστότερος, &c.—Naz, Orat. de Paup.

Is gloria maxime excellit, qui virtute plurimum præstat.—*Cic.*

Κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητός.—Arist. Eth. iv. 3.

Adeo gratiosa virtus est, ut insitum sit etiam malis probare meliora.—*Sen. de Benef.* iv. 17.

† Οεῖόν τι καὶ εὔοτοχόν ἐστι καὶ τοῖς κακοῖς· ὥστε πάμπολλοι τῶν σφόδρα κακῶν εὖ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ταῖς δόξαις διαιροῦνται τοὺς ἀμείνους τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τοὺς χείρους.—Plat. de Repub. xii.

[g] Prov. xii. 26.

[h] Psal. xxxiii. 15; Prov. xxi. 1.

[i] Prov. xvi. 7.

[k] Psal. xxxvii. 6; Ps. xxx. 7; xc. 17.

of them shall be matter of benefit, comfort, and reputation, or of disaster, regret, and disgrace, as he thinks good. Victory and success he absolutely disposeth of, and consequently of the honours that follows them; and they do usually attend the honours of God: for; as it is in the Psalm, *a good success have they who keep his commandments.*[l] Many are the instances of persons, (such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Job, and Daniel,) who, for their signal honouring of God, from a base and obscure, or from an afflicted and forlorn condition, have, in ways strange and wonderful, been advanced to eminent dignity, have been rendered most illustrious, by the providence of him, who *raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar out of the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.*[m] He doth it in an evident manner, and eminent degree, to some; he doth it in a convenient way, and competent measure, to all that honour him.

5. Whereas men are naturally inclined to bear much regard to the judgment of posterity concerning them, are desirous to leave a good name behind them, and to have their memory retained in esteem:[n] God so disposes things, that *the memory of the just shall be blessed;* that *his righteousness shall be had in everlasting remembrance;* that *his light shall rejoice*[o] (or burn clearly and pleasantly, even when his life is put out here.) No spices can so embalm a man, no monument can so preserve his name and memory, as a pious conversation, whereby God hath been honoured, and men benefited.* The fame of such a person is, in the best judgments, far more precious and truly glorious, than is the fame of those who have excelled in any other deeds or qualities. For what sober man doth not in his thoughts afford a more high and hearty respect to those poor fishermen, who by their heroical activity and patience did honour God in the propagation of his heavenly truth, than to all those Hectors in chivalry, those conquerors and achievers of mighty exploits (those Alexanders and Cæsars,) who have been renowned for doing things which seemed great, rather than for performing what was truly good? To the honour of those excellent poor men, conspicuous monuments have been erected every where; anniversary memorials of their names and virtues are celebrated; they are never mentioned or thought of without respect; their commendations are interwoven with the praises of their great Lord and Maker, whom they honoured.*

6. Lastly, to those that honour God here, God hath reserved an honour infinitely great and excellent, in comparison whereto all honours here are but dreams, the loudest acclamations of mortal men are but empty sounds, the brightest glories of this world are but duskish and fleeting shadows; an honour most solid, most durable; *an eternal weightof glory.*[p] They shall, in the face of all the world, be approved by the most righteous Judge's unquestionable sentence; they shall be esteemed in the unanimous opinion of angels and saints; they shall be applauded by the general voice and attestation of heaven; they shall then be seated upon unmoveable thrones, their heads encircled with unfading crowns, their faces shining with rays of unconceivable glory and majesty. The less of honour they have received here in this transitory moment of life, the more thereof they shall enjoy in that future eternal state; where with him who, through the whole course of his life, *sought not his own honour, but the honour of him that sent him;* who, *for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour;* who, *for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set at the right hand of God;*[q] with those who consecrated all their endeavours, and who sacrificed their lives to the promoting of God's honour, they shall possess everlasting glory. Which, together with them, God Almighty of his infinite mercy grant

* Ἀνάγκη, ὡς ἔοικε, μέλειν ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦ ἔπειτα χρόνου· ἐπειδὴ καὶ τυγχάνουσι κατά τινα φύσιν, οἱ μὲν ἀνδραποδωδέστατοι, οὐδὲν φροντίζοντες αὐτοῦ· οἱ δ' ἐπιεικέστατοι, πᾶν ποιοῦντες ὅπως ἂν εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον εὖ ἀκούσωσιν.—Plat. Epist. ii.

[l] Psal. cxi. 10; Prov. iii. 4.

[m] Psal. cvii. 41; 1 Sam. ii. 8. [n] Cic. Tusc. 1.

[o] Prov. x. 7; Psal. cxii. 6; Prov. xiii. 9.

* Τῶν δὲ δούλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὰ σήματα λαμπρὰ, καὶ ἡμέραι καταφανεῖς, ἑορτὴν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ποιοῦσαι, &c. Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or. 27.

[p] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

[q] John viii. 49, 50; Heb. ii. 9; xii. 2.

unto us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, be for ever all honour and praise. Amen.

SERMON V.

UPRIGHT WALKING SURE WALKING.

PROV. x. 9.—*He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.*

THE world is much addicted to the politics; the heads of men are very busy in contrivance, and their mouths are full of talk about the ways of consulting our safety, and securing our interests. May we not therefore presume, that an infallible maxim of policy, proposing the most expedite and certain method of security in all our transactions, will be entertained with acceptance? Such an one the greatest politician and wisest man for business (if we may take God's word for it) that ever was or will be, doth here suggest to us.[a] For the practice couched in our text he otherwhere voucheth for a point of policy, telling us, that *A man of understanding walketh uprightly*:[b] and here he recommendeth it as a method of security, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.*

Treating upon which *aphorism*, I shall, by God's help, endeavour, first, in way of explication, briefly to describe the practice itself; then, in way of proof, by some considerations to declare, that security doth attend it.

For explication. *To walk* (as well in the style of holy Scripture, as in other writings, and even in common speech) doth signify our usual course of dealing, or the constant tenor of our practice.

Uprightly, according to the original, might be rendered, *in perfection*, or, *with integrity*:[c] and by the Greek translators in several places is supposed chiefly to denote sincerity and purity of intention.

In effect, the phrase, *He that walketh uprightly*,[d] doth import, one who is constantly disposed, in his designs and dealings, to bear a principal regard to the rules of his duty, and the dictates of his conscience; who, in every case emergent, is ready to perform that which upon good deliberation doth appear most just and fit, in conformity to God's law and sound reason, without being swayed by any appetite, any passion, any sinister respect to his own private interest of profit, credit, or pleasure, to the commission of any unlawful, irregular, unworthy, or base act; who generally doth act out of good principles (namely, reverence to God, charity to men, sober regard to his own true welfare;) who doth aim at good ends, that is, at God's honour, public benefit, his own salvation, other good things subordinate to those, or well consistent with them; who doth prosecute his designs by lawful means, in fair ways, such as honest providence and industry, veracity and fidelity, dependence upon God's help, and prayer for his blessing: in short, one who never advisedly doth undertake any bad thing, nor any good thing to ill purposes; nor doth use any foul means to compass his intents.

For proof. That such an one doth ever proceed with much security, from the following considerations may appear:—

I. An upright walker is secure of easily finding his way. For it commonly requireth no reach of wit or depth of judgment, no laborious diligence of inquiry, no curious intentness of observation, no solicitous care or plodding study, to discern in any case what is just; we need not much trouble our heads about it, for we can hardly be to seek for it. If we will but open our eyes, it lieth in view before us, being the plain straight, obvious road, which common reason prompteth, or which ordinary instruction pointeth out to us; so that usually that direction of Solomon is sufficient, *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left.*[e]

The ways of iniquity and vanity (if we may call them *ways*, which indeed are but exorbitances and seductions from the way,) ill designs, and bad means of executing designs, are very unintelligible, very obscure, abstruse, and intricate; being infinitely various, and utterly uncertain: so that out of them to pick and

[a] 1 Kings iii. 12. [b] Prov. xv. 21.
[c] בתום
[d] He that walketh in his uprightness, feareth the Lord. Prov. xiv. 2.
[e] Prov. iv. 25, 27; xvii. 24; xiv. 6.

fix on this or that may puzzle our heads, and perplex our hearts; as to pursue any of them may involve us in great difficulty and trouble. But the ways of truth, of right, of virtue, are so very simple and uniform, so fixed and permanent, so clear and notorious, that we can hardly miss them, or (except wilfully) swerve from them. For they by divine wisdom were chalked out, not only for ingenious and subtle persons (men of great parts, of refined wits, of long experience,) but rather for the vulgar community of men, the great body of God's subjects, consisting in persons of meanest capacity, and smallest improvement: being designed to *make wise the simple*, to *give the young man knowledge and discretion*:[f] to direct all sorts of people in their duty, toward their happiness; according to that in the Prophet, *A highway shall be there, and it shall be called, The way of holiness—the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*[g]

They are in very legible characters graven by the finger of God upon our hearts and consciences,[h] so that by any considerate reflection inwards we may easily read them: or they are extant in God's word, there written as with a sunbeam, so perspicuously expressed, so frequently inculcated, that without gross negligence or strange dulness we cannot but descry them. For who with half an eye may not see, that the practice of pious love and reverence toward God, of entire justice and charity toward our neighbour, of sober temperance and purity toward ourselves, is approved by reason, is prescribed by God to us?

Hence in the holy Scriptures, as bad ways are called dark, crooked, rough, slippery ways:[i] so the good ways are said to be clear, plain, direct, even ways:[j] *The path of the just*, say they, *is as a shining light. All the words of my mouth are plain to him that understandeth* (or, *that considereth* them.) *My foot standeth in an even place. The law of his God is in his heart: and none of his steps shall slide.*[k]

Hence it is affirmed, that an upright man doth hardly need any conduct beside his own honesty. For, *the integrity*, saith Solomon, *of the upright shall guide them;* and, *The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way.*[l]

But in case such an one should ever be at a stand or at a loss, in doubt of his course, he hath always at hand a most sure guide to conduct or direct him. It is but asking the way of him, or saying, with the Psalmist, *Show me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths; Teach me to do thy will*, and *Lead me in the way everlasting; O let me not wander from thy commandments*:[m] and then *his ears*, as the Prophet saith, *shall hear a word behind him, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it;* then the words of the Psalmist shall be verified, *What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way.*[n]

Hence is the upright man happily secured from tiring pains in the search, from racking anxieties in the choice, from grating scruples and galling regrets in the pursuit of his way.

II. The upright walker doth tread upon firm ground.[o] He doth build his practice, not upon the perilous bogs, the treacherous quagmires, the devouring quicksands of uncouth, bold, impious paradoxes (such as have been vented by Epicurus, by Machiavel, by others more lately, whose infamous names are too well known, as the effects of their pestilent notions are too much felt;) but upon solid, safe, approved, and well tried principles: viz. these, and the like coherent with them: That there is an eternal God, incomprehensibly powerful, wise, just, and good; who is always present with us, and ever intent upon us; viewing not only all our external actions (open and secret,) but our inmost cogitations, desires, and intentions, by the which our

[f] Psal. xix. 7; cxix. 130; Prov. viii. 5; i. 4; Ps. cxix. 9.
[g] Isa. xxxv. 8. Ὁδὸς καθαρά.—LXX.
[h] Rom. ii. 15; Isa. xxx. 21, Psal. xxxvii. 31.
[i] Prov. iv. 19; ii. 13, 15; John viii. 12; Psal. lxxxii. 5; cxxv. 5; xxxv. 6; lxxiii. 18; Jer. xxiii. 12.
[j] Heb. xii. 13; Psal. v. 8; Luke iii. 5; Prov. iii. 23; Deut. v. 32; xxviii. 14.
[k] Prov. iv. 18; viii. 8, 9; xiv. 6. Πάντα ἐναντία τοῖς συνιοῦσι, LXX. Psal. xxvi. 12; xxxvii. 31; xxvi. 1; xvii. 5; xviii. 36.
[l] Prov. xi. 3, 5.
[m] Psal. xxv. 4; xvi. 11; xvii. 5; cxliii. 10; cxxxix. 24; cxix. 10, 27, 33, 35, &c.
[n] Isa. xxx. 21; Psal. xxv. 9, 12; xxxvii. 23.
[o] (Prov. xii. 5.)

actions chiefly are to be estimated: that he, as governor of the world, and judge of men, doth concern himself in all human affairs, disposing and managing all events according to his righteous pleasure; exacting punctual obedience to his laws, and dispensing recompenses answerable thereto; with impartial justice rewarding each man according to the purposes of his heart and the practices of his life: that all our good and happiness doth absolutely depend on God's favour; so that to please him can only be true wisdom, and to offend him the greatest folly; that virtue is incomparably the best endowment whereof we are capable, and sin the worst mischief to which we are liable: that no worldly good or evil is considerable in comparison with goods or evils spiritual: that nothing can be really profitable or advantageous to us, which doth not consist with our duty to God, doth not somewise conduce to our spiritual interest and eternal welfare: yea, that every thing not serviceable to those purposes is either a frivolous trifle, or a dangerous snare, or a notable damage, or a woful bane to us: that content of mind, springing from innocence of life, from the faithful discharge of our duty, from satisfaction of conscience, from a good hope in regard to God and our future state, is in our esteem and choice much to be preferred, before all the delights which any temporal possession or fruition can afford; and, that a bad mind is the sorest adversity which can befall us. Such are the grounds of upright practice, more firm than any rock, more unshakeable than the foundations of heaven and earth: the which are assured by the sacred Oracles, and attested by many remarkable providences; have ever been avowed by the wiser sort, and admitted by the general consent of men, as for their truth, most agreeable to reason, and for their usefulness, approved by constant experience; the belief of them having apparently most wholesome influence upon all the concerns of life, both public and private; indeed, being absolutely needful for upholding government, and preserving human society: no obligation, no faith or confidence between men, no friendship or peace being able to subsist without it. Whence the practice built on such foundations must be very secure. And if God shall cease to be, if he will not let go the reins, if his word cannot deceive, if the wisest men are not infatuated, if the common sense of mankind do not prove extravagant, if the main props of life and pillars of society do not fail; he that walketh uprightly doth proceed on sure grounds.

III. The upright person doth walk steadily, maintaining his principal resolutions, and holding his main course, through all occasions, without flinching or wavering, or desultory or inconsistence and fickleness; his integrity being an excellent ballast, holding him tight and well poised in his deportment; so that waves of temptation dashing on him do not make him roll in uncertainty, or topple over into unworthy practices.

Lust, passion, humour, interest, are things very mutable, as depending upon temper of body, casualties of time, the winds and tides of this vertiginous world: whence he that is guided or moved by them must needs be *many-minded* and *unstable in all his ways*:[o] will *reel to and fro like a drunken man, and be at his wit's end*;[p] never enjoying any settled rest of mind, or observing a smooth tenor of action. But a good conscience is very stable, and persisteth unvaried through all circumstances of time, in all vicissitudes of fortune. For it steereth by immoveable pole-stars, the inviolable rules of duty; it aimeth at marks which no force can stir out of their place; its objects of mind and affection are not transitory; its hopes and confidences are fixed on the *rock of ages*. Whence an upright person in all cases, and all conditions (prosperous or adverse,) is the same man, and goeth the same way.* Contingencies of affairs do not unhinge his mind from its good purposes, or divert his foot from the right course. Let the weather be fair or foul, let the world smile or frown, let him get or lose by it, let him be favoured or crossed, commended or reproached (*by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report*,)[q] he will do what his duty requireth: the external state of things must not alter the moral reason of things with

* Τετράγωνος. Justum et tenacem propositi virum, &c.—*Hor. Od.* III. 3, 1.

[o] James i. 8. [p] Psal. cvii. 27.

[q] 2 Cor. vi. 8.

him. This is that which the Psalmist observeth of him: *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord. His heart is established and will not shrink.*[r] And this the Wise Man promiseth to him: *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*[s]

Hence, a man is secured from diffidence in himself, and distraction in his mind, from frequently being off the hooks, from leading an unequal life, clashing with itself, from deluding and disappointing those with whom he converseth or dealeth, and consequently from the inconveniences issuing thence.

IV. The way of uprightness is the surest for dispatch, and the shortest cut toward the execution or attainment of any good purpose; securing a man from irksome expectations and tedious delays, the which, as the Wise Man saith, *do make the heart sick.*[t]

It in the Scripture is called *the straight and the plain way.*[u] And as in geometry, of all lines or surfaces contained within the same bounds, the straight line and the plain surface are the shortest; so it is also in morality: by the right line of justice, upon the plain ground of virtue, a man soonest will arrive to any well-chosen end.

In this way there are no bewildering intrigues and mazes, no crooked windings and turnings, no occasions forcing men to dance hither and thither, to skip backward and forward, to do and undo; which courses do protract business, and commonly do hinder from ever dispatching it. But a man acting justly and fairly doth continually proceed on in the direct open road, without retreat, excursion, or deflection; *not turning aside* (as the phrase is in holy writ) *to the right hand or to the left.*[v]

To clamber over fences of duty, to break through the hedges of right, to trespass upon hallowed enclosures, may seem the most short and compendious ways of getting thither where one would be: but doth not a man venture breaking his neck, or scratching his face, incurring mischief and trouble thereby? Is he not liable to the fate to which the Preacher doometh him: *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it: and whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him?*[w] For instance, to grow rich, fraud, extortion, corruption, oppression, overreaching and supplanting may seem the readiest and most expedite ways; but in truth they are the farthest ways about, or rather no ways at all: for that which is got by those means is not our own; nor is the possession of it truly wealth, but usurpation, or detention of spoil and rapine, which we ought to disgorge. And however to the getting it there are often mighty difficulties occurring from men, there are commonly insuperable obstacles interposed by God; who hath expressly condemned and cursed those ways, declaring, that, *wealth gotten by vanity* (or cozenage) *shall be diminished;* that *he that oppresseth to increase his riches, shall surely come to want;* that *he who* (thus) *hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him;*[x] that *as the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.*[y] Whereas the plain way of honest harmless industry (joined with a pious regard to him who is the dispenser of all good things,) how slow soever it may seem, is the most speedy, because the only safe way to thrive; having, beside all secondary advantages, the security of those oracles: *The hand of the diligent shall make rich: He that gathereth by labour shall increase: By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.*[z]

V. The way of uprightness is in itself very safe, free of danger, tending to no mischief; according to those sayings of the Wise Man: *There shall no evil happen to the just: In the way of righteousness is life; and in the path thereof there is no death.*[a]

He who designeth only that which is just and reasonable, who innocently and fairly prosecuteth his intent, can run no

[r] Psal. cxii. 7, 8; Prov. iii. 25.
[s] Prov. xvi. 3.
[t] Prov xiii. 12. [u] Luke iii. 5.
[v] Prov. iv. 27; Deut. v. 32; xxviii. 14.
[w] Eccles. x. 8.
[x] Prov. xxiii. 10, 11; xiii. 11; xxii. 16; xxviii. 22, 20; xxi. 6. [y] Jer. xvii. 11.
[z] Prov. x. 4; xxviii. 19; xiii. 11; xxii. 4; Psal. cxii. 3.
[a] Prov. xxviii. 18; xvi. 17; xiii. 6; x. 29; xii. 21, 28.

great hazard, cannot fall into any extreme disaster, cannot irrecoverably sink into miserable disappointment.[b]

He probably will not receive much harm from men, or trouble from the world: for, as he meaneth innocently, as he dealeth inoffensively (not violently assailing, or fraudulently circumventing, not any wise injuriously or maliciously abusing any man,) as he doth yield no just provocation or urgent temptation to oppose him; so he is not very likely to meet with obstructions or crosses thwarting his designs. He can hardly raise up adversaries, at least such as will prove very formidable, or very fierce and implacable toward him.

He may be sure that few wise men, and no good men, will trouble him; but that such rather will afford their countenance and furtherance to his undertakings.

But assuredly he shall have the favourable protection of Almighty God, who thoroughly knowing his heart, and observing the righteousness of his intentions and proceedings, will not suffer him to incur any notable, destructive, remediless calamity. His prayer, dictated by good conscience, *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me*, will certainly be heard; God having passed his word for it in numberless places of Scripture;[c] particularly in those remarkable words of Isaiah: *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: his bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.*[d] That is, a man who is constantly upright in his dealings, shall, by the divine providence, be infallibly and impregnably preserved from any grievous mischief, from any sore want, from any extreme distress.

The way of uprightness is ever guarded with angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honest person, or at least to protect him from evil. He may hopefully say to himself, as Abraham did to his servant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way:*[e] or he confidently may apply to himself that of the Psalmist, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*[f]

However, the sequel will be tolerable: whatever the success of his undertaking be, it can be no ruin, no slur, no heart-breaking to him. His conscience is safe, his credit is entire, his hopes are good; he is perfectly secure from being tainted with foul guilt, from being exposed to due reproach, from being stung with vexatious remorse, from being plunged into a gulf of desperation or disconsolateness. For,

VI. The way of uprightness is fair and pleasant. He that walketh in it hath good weather, and a clear sky about him; a hopeful confidence and a cheerful satisfaction do ever wait upon him. *It is joy*, as the Wise Man saith, *to the just to do judgment.*[g]

Being conscious to himself of an honest meaning, and a due course of prosecuting it, he feeleth no check or struggling of mind, no regret or sting of heart;[h] being thoroughly satisfied and pleased with what he is about, his judgment approving, and his will acquiescing in his procedure as worthy of himself, agreeable to reason, and conformable to his duty.

He therefore briskly moveth forward with alacrity and courage; there being within him nothing to control or countermand him, to pull him back, to make him halt, to distract or disturb him.

Nor hardly can any thing abroad dismay or discourage him. For he may reasonably hope for the good will of men, and cannot hugely dread their opposition. He may strongly presume upon the propitious aspect and favourable succour of heaven, which always smileth and casteth benign influences on honest undertakings.[i]

He that hath chosen a good way, may with assurance commend his way to

[b] Psal. xxxvii. 21.
[c] Psal. xxv. 21; (Prov. xiii. 6; xi. 6;) Prov. ii. 7; xviii. 10; xxviii. 18; xxix. 25; Psal. xviii. 2, 30, 35; xxiii. 4; xxiv. 4, 5; Job. xi. 14, 15.
[d] Isa xxxiii. 15, 16.
[e] Gen. xxiv. 40.
[f] Psal. xci. 11, 12.
[g] Prov. xxi. 15.
[h] Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.
[i] Prov. xi. 20.

God's providence; he may depend upon God for his concurrent benediction; he, with an humble boldness, may address prayers to God for his protection and aid.[j] He, so doing, hath interest in divers clear declarations and express promises of good success; such as those: *Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them.*[k]

He may dare to refer his case to the severest examination, saying with Job, *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity;*[l] and with the Psalmist, *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*[m]

He with an humble confidence can appeal to God, borrowing the words of Hezekiah, *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.*[n]

Hence, *The hope of the righteous*, as the Wise Man telleth us, *is gladness.*[o] He, considering the goodness, the justice, the fidelity of God, whereof his integrity doth render him capable and a proper object, cannot but conceive a comfortable hope of a good issue.

And obtaining success, he doth not only enjoy the material pleasure thereof, but the formal satisfaction that it is indeed good success, or a blessing indulged to him by special favour of God; enabling him to say with the Psalmist, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*[p]

However, an upright dealer hath this comfortable reserve, that whatever doth befall him, however the business goeth, he shall not condemn and punish himself with remorse; he shall not want a consolation able to support and to erect his mind. He shall triumph, if not in the felicity of his success, yet in the integrity of his heart, and the innocence of his deportment; even as blessed Job did under all the pressures of his adversity: for, *till I die*, said he, *I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*[q]

So true it is upon all accounts, that, according to that assertion in the Psalm, *Light is sown for the righteous, and joyful gladness for the upright in heart.*[r]

VII. He that walketh uprightly is secure as to his honour and credit. He is sure not to come off disgracefully, either at home in his own apprehensions, or abroad in the estimations of men. He doth not blush at what he is doing, nor doth reproach himself for what he hath done. No blemish or blame can stick upon his proceeding.

By pure integrity, a man first maintaineth a due respect and esteem for himself; then preserveth an entire reputation with others: he reflecteth on his own heart with complacence, and looketh upon the world with confidence. He hath no fear of being detected, or care to smother his intents. He is content that his thoughts should be sounded, and his actions sifted to the bottom. He could even wish that his breast had windows, that his heart were transparent, that all the world might see through him, and descry the clearness of his intentions. The more curiously his ways are marked, the more exactly his dealings are scanned, the more thoroughly his designs are penetrated and known; the greater approbation he is sure to receive.

The issue of things assuredly will be creditable to him; and when the daylight hath scattered all mists, hath cleared all misprisions and mistakes, his reputation will shine most brightly; the event declaring, that he had no corrupt ends; the course of his proceedings being justified by the very light of things.

God himself will be concerned to vindicate his reputation, not suffering him to be considerably defamed; according to that promise, *He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day.*[s] That in Job will be made good to him, *Then shalt thou*

[j] Jer. xxxii. 19; Prov. xxiv. 14; Heb. iv. 16.
[k] Psal. xxxvii. 5; lv. 22; Prov. xvi 3; Eccles. ii 10; Psal. xxxiv 22; xxvi. 1; xxxiii. 21; Prov. x 24; Psal. cxv. 18, 19; xxxiv. 15; xxvi. 11; Job xxii. 27.
[l] Job xxxi. 6.
[m] Psal. vii. 8; xxvi. 1.
[n] 2 Kings xx. 3.
[o] Prov. x. 28.
[p] Psal. xviii. 20, 21.
[q] Job xxvii. 5, 6.
[r] Psal. xcvii. 11.
[s] Psal. xxxvii. 6, 19; xxxiv. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 6.

lift up thy face without spot.[t] And he may confidently aver with the Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.*[u]

If he findeth good success, it will not be invidious, appearing well deserved, and fairly procured: it will be truly honourable, as a fruit and recompense of virtue, as a mark and pledge of the divine favour toward him.

If he seemeth disappointed, yet he will not be disparaged:[v] wise and candid men will excuse him; good men will patronize his cause; no man of sense and ingenuity will insult on his misfortune. *He shall not*, as the Psalmist assureth, *be ashamed in an evil time.*[x] Yea, often his repute from under a cloud will shine, if not with so glaring splendour, yet with a pleasant lustre; uprightness disposing him to bear adverse events with a graceful decency.

VIII. The particular methods of acting which uprightness disposeth to observe, do yield great security from troubles and crosses in their transactions.

What is the conduct of the upright man? He is clear, frank, candid, harmless, consistent in all his behaviour, his discourse, his dealing. His heart commonly may be seen in his face, his mind doth ever suit with his speech, his deeds have a just correspondence with his professions; he never faileth to perform what he doth promise, and to satisfy the expectations which he hath raised.[y]

He doth not wrap himself in clouds, that none may see where he is, or know how to find him; may discern what he is about, or whither he tendeth.

He disguiseth not his intents with fallacious pretences of conscience, of public good, of special friendship and respect.[z]

He doth use no disingenuous, spiteful, unjust tricks or sleights, to serve the present turn.

He layeth no baits or snares *to catch men*, alluring them into mischief or inconvenience.[a]

As he doth not affect any poor base ends, so he will not defile his fair intentions by sordid means of compassing them; such as are illusive simulations and subdolous artifices, treacherous collusions, sly insinuations and sycophantic detractions, versatile whifflings and dodgings, flattering colloguings and glozings, servile crouchings and fawnings, and the like.[b]

He hath little of the serpent (none of its lurking insidiousness, of its surprising violence, of its rancorous venom, of its keen mordacity,) but much of the dove (all its simplicity, its gentleness, its fidelity, its innocence,) in his conversation and commerce.[c]

His wisdom is ever tempered with sincerity, and seasoned with humanity, with meekness, with charity; being *the wisdom which is from above, first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*[d]

He sometime may prudently reserve his mind, not venting it by foolish loquacity: but his words do never clash with his meaning, so as to deceive or disappoint any man.[e]

He may warily prevent harm and decline perils: but it is without hurtful countermining, or devising mischief on his neighbour.[f]

He may discreetly pick out seasons, and embrace opportunities of righting or benefiting himself: but he never will seek or lay hold of advantages to prejudice others.[g]

He sometimes may repress insurrections of anger or disgust: but he never doth allow them to bake into rancour or malice.[h]

He may be apt to use courteous, affable, obliging demeanour, serving to breed friendships, and to stifle enmities: but he never thereby meaneth to gull, inveigle, and entrap men; or to procure instruments and aids of any perverse design.

He is no enemy to himself, but (according to the obligations of reason and con-

[t] Job xi. 15.
[u] Psal. cxix. 6, 39, 46.
[v] Psal. xci 15.
[x] Psal. xxxvii. 19.
[y] Prov. xiii. 5; Psal. xxxvi. 3, 4; xxxiv. 13; xv. 2.
[z] Prov. x. 18.
[a] Jer. v. 26; (Psal. lxiv. 5; lvi. 6; ix. 15; vii. 15; x. 2; lvii. 6; xxxv. 7; cxl. 5; Prov. xxvi. 27; Eccles. x. 8.)
[b] Psal. x. 7; lv. 21; lxiv. 6; x. 9, 10; lvi. 5; Rom. xvi. 18; Ecclus. xix. 26.
[c] 2 Sam. xv. 5; Prov. xi. 9. xxvi. 25.
[d] James iii. 17.
[e] Prov. xiv. 33; xxix. 11; xiii. 3, 16; xxi. 23; xii. 23; Ecclus. xx. 7.
[f] Prov. xxii. 3; xxvii. 12; xiv. 8, 15, 16.
[g] Eccles. viii. 5.
[h] Prov. xii. 16; xix. 11.

science) he hath always a regard to the good of others; nor is ever so selfish, as to be unjust or uncharitable to any man.

The principal engines he doth employ for achieving his enterprises are, a careful and cautious providence in contriving, a sedulous and steady diligence in acting, a circumspect heedfulness not to provoke any man by offensive carriage, by injury, by discourtesy, to obstruct him; but rather by kind demonstrations and real beneficence to engage men to further him in his proceedings: but especially his main instrument, wherein he most confideth, is devout supplication to God for his succour and blessing.

Now, is not this conduct the most secure that can be? doth it not afford many great commodities and advantages? doth it not exempt from manifold fears, and cares, and crosses, and slaveries?

It cannot but derive blessings from the God of truth, the great friend of simplicity and sincerity, the hater of falsehood and guile.[i]

And, humanly regarding things, he that useth these methods, doth from them obtain many conveniences. He doth not lie under perpetual constraint, engaged to keep a constant guard upon himself, to watch his memory, to curb his tongue, to manage his very looks and gestures, lest they betray his intentions, and disclose his plots. He is not at the trouble of stopping holes, of mending flaws, of patching up repugnances in his actions, that his mind do not break through them. He is not afraid of the disappointment and shame which attend the detection of unworthy designs. He is not at pains to obviate the jealousies, the surmises, the diffidences, the counterplots, the preventive oppositions and assaults, which gloomy closeness and crafty dissimulations ever do raise against the practisers of them.[j] In fine, men do not shun the conversation and the commerce of an upright person, but gladly do consort and deal with him; do seek his acquaintance and alliance: they are not apt to distrust him, to suspect him, to be shy and reserved in their intercourse with him; but readily do place an entire confidence in him, and use a clear frankness toward him. No man doth fear him as dangerous, or will cross him as an adversary. Whence, as he seldom hath cause to fear, or occasion to contest with others, so he doth undisturbedly enjoy the benefits of society with great safety, ease, and comfort.

IX. Lastly, an upright walker hath perfect security, as to the final result of affairs, that he shall not be quite baffled in his expectations and desires. And if prosperity doth consist in a satisfaction of mind concerning events, he cannot fail of most prosperous success. *Whatsoever he doeth*, saith the Psalmist of him, *it shall prosper*.[k] How is that? doth he, if he warreth, always get the victory? is he perpetually, when he tradeth, a considerable gainer? will he certainly, after sowing, reap a plentiful crop? Probably yes; and perhaps no. Yet assuredly he shall prosper, in the true notion of prosperity, explained by those divine sayings: *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever. Surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God.*[l]

He cannot be much defeated in his purposes: for, as to his general, principal, absolute designs (that is, his design of pleasing God, and procuring his favour; his design of satisfying himself, and discharging his conscience; his design of promoting his own spiritual interest, and saving his soul; his design of doing good, of exercising charity to his neighbour, of serving the public, of obliging the world by virtuous example, and by real beneficence;) these he cannot fail thoroughly to accomplish: nothing can obstruct him in the prosecution: nothing can debar him from the execution of these undertakings: in spite of all the world, by the succour of that divine grace which ever doth favour and further such designs, he most happily will achieve them. And for other inferior designs, he can hardly be crossed in regard to them; for it is an essential part of integrity, not otherwise to affect or aim at private, secular interests, than under condition, and with a reservation, if it be God's pleasure, if it seem good to divine wisdom. He

[i] Prov. xii. 19, 22.
[j] Prov. xxvi. 25; x. 18; xxi. 6; Psal. xxvi. 4.
[k] Psal. i. 3; Prov. xii. 21.
[l] Psal. xxxvii. 37; Isa. xxxii. 17; Eccles. viii. 12.

knoweth that his pains employed on any honest purpose, in a fair way (be it to procure some worldly advantage for himself, for his relations, or for his friends,) are not lost, if they have the fruit of submission to God's will, and acquiescence in the event disposed by him. He is assured that it is good luck to have his project blasted, and that missing is better than getting, when by sovereign wisdom it is so determined. He therefore could not so fix his heart, or engage his affection in any such concern, that his mind is surprised, or his passions discomposed by a seeming adverseness of events to his endeavours. So that in effect he can have no bad success. For how can that occurrence be deemed bad, which plain reason dictateth in certain judgment to be most expedient for him about which he ever was very indifferent, and with which at present he is not heartily displeased? How can it be taken for disappointment and misfortune, which one was prepared to embrace with satisfaction and complacence? Yea, to a person so disposed, that success which seemeth most adverse, justly may be reputed the best and most happy, as promoting ends incomparably more excellent than any worldly gain; as producing fruits exceedingly more wholesome and more savoury than any temporal commodity; as exercising and improving the divinest virtues (humility, patience, meekness, moderation, contentedness,) a grain whereof is worth all the wealth, all the preferment, all that is desirable in the world.

Wherefore let the worst that can arrive (or that which human blindness and fondness do count the worst,) yet upright persons do not come off ill, or so (matters being rightly stated) as to be losers upon the foot of the account.

If this do not satisfy grosser apprehensions, we may add, that even in these meaner concerns, Almighty God is pleased commonly to reward and encourage upright persons by the best success. For he hath, as it were, a natural inclination to gratify those who desire to please him; and as the Psalmist expresseth it, *hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.*[m] He may seem concerned in honour to countenance those who have regard to his will, and who repose confidence in his aid; discriminating them from such as presume to act against or without him, in defiance to his will, with no deference to his providence. As they do render him his due respect, by submitting to his authority, and avowing his power; so he will acknowledge them by signally favouring their concerns.[n] Even his truth and fidelity are engaged in their behalf; seeing he very often hath declared and promised, that in all matters, and upon all occasions, he will be ready to bless them.[o]

X. To conclude: it is an infinite advantage of upright dealing, that at the last issue, when all things shall be most accurately tried and impartially decided, a man is assured to be fully justified in it, and plentifully rewarded for it.[p] As then all the deceits, which now pass under specious masks, shall be laid bare;[q] all varnish of pretence shall be wiped off; all perverse intrigues shall be unravelled; all wicked and base intentions shall be quite stripped of the veils which now enfold them; all shrewd contrivers and engineers of mischief; all practisers of unjust and malicious guile, shall be exposed to shame, *shall lie down in sorrow:*[r] so then *the righteous man shall stand in great boldness;* his case will be rightly stated, and fully cleared from slanderous aspersions, from odious surmises, from unlucky prejudices and mistakes: what he hath done shall be approved; what he hath suffered shall be repaired. So that it then evidently will appear, that upright simplicity is the deepest wisdom, and perverse craft the merest shallowness; that he who is true and just to others, is most faithful and friendly to himself; that whoever doth abuse his neighbour, is his own greatest cheater and foe. For, *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, every man's work shall be made manifest.*[s] *The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of*

[m] Psal. xxxv. 27; Prov. xi. 20; xv. 9.

[n] Prov. xiv. 2.

[o] Deut. xxviii. 2; xxx. 9; Psal. cxxviii. 1, 2; xci. 1; xxxiv. 9, 10; lxxxiv. 11; Matt. vi. 33; Eccles. viii. 5.

[p] Prov. xxviii. 10, 20; x. 6.

[q] Prov. xi. 18. [r] Isa. l. 11.

[s] Rom. ii. 16.

the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God.[t] Unto which our upright Judge, *the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*[u]

SERMON VI.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

1 THESS. v. 17.—*Pray without ceasing.*

IT is the manner of St. Paul in his Epistles, after that he hath discussed some main points of doctrine or discipline (which occasion required that he should clear and settle,) to propose several good advices and rules, in the observance whereof the life of Christian practice doth consist. So that he thereby hath furnished us with so rich a variety of moral and spiritual precepts, concerning special matters, subordinate to the general laws of piety and virtue, that out of them might well be compiled a body of ethics, or system of precepts *de officiis*, in truth and in completeness far excelling those which any philosophy hath been able to devise or deliver. These he rangeth not in any formal method, nor linketh together with strict connexion, but freely scattereth them, so as from his mind (as out of a fertile soil, impregnated with all seeds of wisdom and goodness,) they did aptly spring up, or as they were suggested by that Holy Spirit which continually guided and governed him.

Among divers such delivered here, this is one which shall be the subject of my present discourse; the which, having no other plain coherence (except by affinity of matter) with the rest inclosing it, I shall consider absolutely by itself, endeavouring somewhat to explain it, and to urge its practice.

Pray without ceasing. For understanding these words, let us first consider what is meant by the act enjoined, *praying;* then what the qualification or circumstance adjoined, *without ceasing*, doth import.

1. The word *prayer* doth in its usual latitude of acception, comprehend all sorts of devotion, or all that part of religious practice wherein we do immediately address ourselves to God, having by speech (oral or mental) a kind of intercourse and conversation with him. So it includeth that praise which we should yield to God, implying our due esteem of his most excellent perfections, most glorious works, most just and wise dispensations of providence and grace; that thanksgiving whereby we should express an affectionate presentment of our obligation to him for the numberless great benefits we receive from him; that acknowledgment of our entire dependence upon him, or our total subjection to his power and pleasure; together with that profession of faith in him, and avowing of service to him, which we do owe as his natural creatures and subjects; that humble confession of our infirmity, our vileness, our guilt, our misery (joined with deprecation of wrath and vengeance,) which is due from us as wretched men, and grievous sinners; that petition of things needful or convenient for us (of supply in our wants, of succour and comfort in our distresses, of direction and assistance in our undertakings, of mercy and pardon for our offences,) which our natural state (our poor, weak, sad, and sinful state,) doth engage us to seek; that intercession for others, which general charity or special relation do require from us, as concerned or obliged to desire and promote their good. All these religious performances, prayer, in its larger notion, doth comprise; according whereto in common use the whole body of divine service, containing all such acts, is termed *prayer;* and temples, consecrated to the performance of holy duties, are styled *houses of prayer;* and that brief directory, or pregnant form of all devotion, which our Lord dictated, is called *his prayer:* and in numberless places of Scripture it is so taken.

In a stricter sense, it doth only signify one particular act among those, the petition of things needful or useful for us.

But according to the former more comprehensive meaning, I choose to understand it here; both because it is most commonly so used (then, especially, when no distinctive limitation is annexed, or the nature of the subject-matter doth not re-

[t] 1 Cor. iii. 13; iv. 5. [u] 1 Tim. i. 17.

strain it,) and because general reasons do equally oblige to performance of all these duties in the manner here prescribed: nor is there any ground to exclude any part of devotion from continual use; we being obliged no less incessantly to praise God for his excellences, and thank him for his benefits, to avow his sovereign majesty and authority, to confess our infirmities and miscarriages, than to beg help and mercy from God. All devotion, therefore, all sorts of proper and due address to God, (that πᾶσα προσευχὴ, *all prayer and supplication*,[a] which St. Paul otherwhere speaketh of) are here enjoined, according to the manner adjoined, *without ceasing*, ἀδιαλείπτως, that is, indesinently, or continually.

2. For the meaning of which expression, we must suppose, that it must not be understood as if we were obliged in every instant or singular point of time actually to apply our minds to this practice; for to do thus is in itself impossible, and therefore can be no matter of duty: it is inconsistent with other duties, and therefore must not be practised; yea, will not consist with itself: for, that we may pray, we must live; that we may live, we must eat; that we may eat, we must work; and must therefore attend other matters: so that actual devotion neither must nor can swallow up all our time and care. The deliberate operations of our mind are sometimes interrupted by sleep, sometimes will be taken up in satisfying our natural appetites, sometimes must be spent in attendance upon other reasonable employments, commanded or allowed by God; whence there can be no obligation to this practice according to that unlimited interpretation. This precept, therefore (as divers others of a like general purport and expression,) must be understood not in a natural, but moral sense, according as the exigence of things permitteth, or as the reason of the case requireth; so far as it is conveniently practicable, or as it is reasonably compatible with other duties and needs. But we must not so restrain it as to wrong it, by pinching it within too narrow bounds. How then it may be understood, and how far it should extend, we shall endeavour to declare, by propounding divers senses whereof it is capable, grounded upon plain testimonies of Scripture, and enforcible by good reason; according to which senses we shall together press the observance thereof.*

1. First, then, *praying incessantly* may import the maintaining in our souls a ready disposition or habitual inclination to devotion; that which in Scripture is termed *the spirit of supplication*.[b] This, in moral esteem, and according to current language derived thence, amounteth to a continual practice; a man being reckoned and said to do that, to which he is ever prompt and propense: as it is said of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful and lendeth*,[c] because he is constantly disposed to supply his neighbour with needful relief; although he doth not ever actually dispense alms, or furnish his neighbour with supplies for his necessity.† The words may signify this; they do at least by consequence imply so much: for if we do not in this, we can hardly perform the duty in any sense; without a good temper fitting, and a good appetite prompting to devotion, we scarce can or ever will apply ourselves thereto. If there be not in our heart a root of devotion, whence should it spring? how can it live, or thrive? If the organs of prayer are out of kelter, or out of tune, how can we pray? If we be not *accincti*, have not *the loins of our mind girt*, and *our feet shod in preparation* to the service, when shall we set forward thereto?[d] *My heart*, said David, *is fixed, I will sing and give praise*:[e] *fixed*, that is, readily prepared, and steadily inclined to devotion. So should ours constantly be. As a true friend is ever ready to entertain his friend with a frank courtesy and complacency; as he ever is apt upon occasion for advice and assistance to have recourse to him: so should we be always disposed cheerfully and decently to converse with God, when he freely cometh to us, or we have need to apply ourselves to him. If there be (from stupidity of mind, from coldness of affection, from

[a] Eph. vi. 18.

* Adoro Scripturæ plenitudinem.—*Tert.*

† Ut quamvis tacet Hermogenes, cantor tamen æque est, &c.—*Hor.*

[c] Psal. xxxvii. 26. [b] Zech. xii. 19.

[d] 1 Pet. i. 13; Luke xii. 35; Eph. vi. 14.

[e] Psal. cviii. 1; (2 Chron. xxx. 19; Ezra vii. 10.)

sluggishness of spirit, from worldly distraction) any indisposition or averseness thereto, we should, by serious consideration and industrious care, labour to remove them; rousing our spirits, and kindling in our affections some fervency of desire toward spiritual things; otherwise we shall be apt to shun, or to slip the opportunities inviting to devotion; our hearts will be so resty, or listless, that hardly we shall be induced to perform it, when it is most necessary or useful for us.

II. *Praying incessantly* may denote a vigilant attendance (with earnest regard, and firm purpose) employed upon devotion: such attendance as men usually bestow on their affairs, whereof although the actual prosecution sometime doth stick, yet the design continually proceedeth; the mind ever so directing its eye toward them, as quickly to espy, and readily to snatch any advantages of promoting them. This is a kind of continuance in practice, and is commonly so termed: as we say, that such an one is building a house, is writing a book, is occupying such land, although he be at present sleeping, or eating, or following any other business; because his main design never sleepeth, and his purpose continues uninterrupted. This is that which is so often enjoined under the phrase of *watching* about prayer. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always*, saith our Lord. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same*, saith St. Paul. *Be ye sober, and watch unto prayer*,[f] saith St. Peter. Which expressions import a most constant and careful attendance upon this duty: that we do not make it a *πάρεργον*, or bye-business in our life (a matter of small consideration or indifference, of curiosity, of chance,) to be transacted drowsily or faintly, with a desultorious and slight endeavour, by fits, as the humour taketh us; but that, accounting it a business of the choicest nature and weightiest moment, we do adhere thereto with unmoveable purpose, regard it with undistracted attention, pursue it with unwearied diligence, being always upon the guard, wakeful and expedite, intent upon and apt to close with any occasion suggesting matter thereof. That we should do thus, reason also doth oblige: for that, as in truth no business doth better deserve our utmost resolution and care; so none doth more need them; nature being so backward, and occasion so slippery, that if we do not ever mind it, we shall seldom practise it.

III. *Praying incessantly* may signify, that we do actually embrace all fit seasons and emergent occasions of devotion.[g] This in moral computation doth pass for continual performance: as a tree is said to bear that fruit, which it produceth in the season; and a man is accounted to work in that trade, which he exerciseth whenever he is called thereto. This sense is, in several precepts parallel to that in hand, plainly expressed. *Pray*, saith St. Paul, *with all prayer and supplication*, *ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ* and, *Watch*, saith our Lord, *ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι*, *praying in every season*, or upon every opportunity.[h] Devotion, indeed, is rarely unseasonable, or impertinent: we may offer it *εὐκαίρως, ἀκαίρως*, *in season and out of season*;[i] that is, not only taking opportunities presented for it, or urgently requiring it, but catching at them, and creating them to ourselves, when there is no such apparent and pressing need of it. But there are some special occasions, which more importunately and indispensably do exact it; some seasons there are (either ministered by extrinsical accidents, or springing from internal dispositions,) when, without both great blame and much damage to ourselves, we cannot neglect it: times there be most proper and acceptable, when we do especially need to pray, and when we are likely to speed well therein. *Every one* (saith the Psalmist) *that is godly will pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found*; and, *My prayer*, saith he again, *is unto thee in an acceptable time*.[k]

Thus, when we have received any singular blessing or notable favour from God, when prosperous success hath attended our honest enterprises, when we have been happily rescued from imminent dangers, when we have been sup-

[f] Luke xxi. 36; Col. iv. 2; Eph. vi. 18; 1 Pet. iv. 7; Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13.

[g] 2 Pet. i. 12, *ἀεὶ ὑπομιμνήσκειν*; Gal. iv. 18. *πάντοτε ζηλοῦσθαι*.

[h] Eph. vi. 18; Luke xxi. 36.

[i] 2 Tim. iv. 2.

[k] Psal. xxxii. 6; lxix. 13; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Isa. xlix. 8.

ported in difficulties, or relieved in wants and straits; then is it seasonable to render sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise to the God of victory, help, and mercy; to admire and celebrate him, who is our *strength*, *and* our *deliverer*, our *faithful refuge in trouble*, our *fortress*, *and the rock of* our *salvation*.[l] To omit this piece of devotion, then, is vile ingratitude, or stupid negligence and sloth.

When any rare object or remarkable occurrence doth, upon this theatre of the world, present itself to our view, in surveying the glorious works of nature, or the strange events of Providence; then is a proper occasion suggested to send up hymns of praise to the power, the wisdom, the goodness of the world's great Creator and Governor.

When we undertake any business of special moment and difficulty, then it is expedient (wisdom prompting it) to sue for God's aid, to commit our affairs into his hand, to recommend our endeavours to the blessing of him, by whose guidance all things are ordered, without whose concourse nothing can be effected, upon whose arbitrary disposal all success dependeth.*

The beginning of any design or business (although ordinary, if considerable) is a proper season of prayer unto him, to whose bounty and favour we owe our ability to act, support in our proceedings, any comfortable issue of what we do (for *all our sufficiency is of him: without him we can do nothing.*)[m] Whence we can never apply ourselves to any business or work, nor go to eat, to sleep, to travel, to trade, to study, with any true content, any reasonable security, any satisfactory hope, if we do not first humbly implore the favourable protection, guidance, and assistance of God.

When we do fall into doubts, or darknesses (in the course either of our spiritual or secular affairs,) not knowing what course to steer, or which way to turn ourselves (a case which, to so blind and silly creatures as we are, must often happen;) then doth the time bid us to consult the great Oracle of truth, *the mighty counsellor*, *the Father of lights*, seeking resolution and satisfaction, light and wisdom from him; saying with the Psalmist, *Show me thy ways, O Lord, lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation: Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me;* following the advice of St. James, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*[n]

When any storm of danger blustereth about us, perilously threatening, or furiously assailing us with mischief (so that hardly by our own strength or wit we can hope to evade,) then with the wings of ardent devotion we should fly unto God for shelter and for relief.[o]

When any anxious care distracteth, or any heavy burden presseth our minds, we should by prayer ease ourselves of them, and discharge them upon God, committing the matter of them to his care and providence; according to that direction of St. Paul, *Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*[p]

When we do lie under any irksome trouble, or sore distress (of want, pain, disgrace,) then, for succour and support, for ease and comfort, we should have recourse to *the Father of pities and God of all consolation; who is nigh to all that call upon him, will also hear their cry, and will save them;* who, when *the righteous cry, doth hear them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles;* who is so often styled *the hiding-place from troubles, the help and strength, the shield and buckler, the rock, the fortress, the high tower, the horn of salvation*, to all good and distressed people.[q] To him we should in such a condition have recourse, imitating the pious Psalmist, whose practice was this: *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: I poured out my complaint before him, I show-*

* Δεῖ πάσης πράξεως προηγεῖσθαι προσευχήν.—Marc. Erem.

[l] Psal. xviii. 1, 2; lxxi. 3. &c.

[m] 2 Cor. iii. 5; John xv. 5.

[n] Jer. x. 23; Prov. xx. 24; xvi. 9; Isa. ix. 6; James i. 17; Psal. xxv. 4, 5, 8; xxvii. 11; lxxxvi. 11; cxliii. 10; xxxii. 8; cxix. 125, 133; James i. 5; Prov. ii. 6; Isa. xxx. 1.

[o] Psal. lvi. 3; xxxiv. 4; xviii. 3.

[p] Phil. iv. 6.

[q] 2 Cor. i. 3; Psal. cxlv. 18, 19; cxlvii. 3; xxxiv. 17; xviii. 1, 2; lvi. 3; lxxxiv. 9; xxxii. 7; xxxiii. 20; lxxi. 3.

ed before him my trouble; I called unto the Lord in my distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.[r]

When any strong temptation doth invade us, with which by our own strength we cannot grapple, but are like to sink and falter under it; then is it opportune and needful that we should seek to God for a supply of spiritual forces, and the succour of his almighty grace, as St. Paul did: when *there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him;* then *he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him:* and he had this return from God, *My grace is sufficient for thee.*[s]

When also (from ignorance or mistake, from inadvertency, negligence or rashness, from weakness, from wantonness, from presumption) we have transgressed our duty, and incurred sinful guilt; then (for avoiding the consequent danger and vengeance, for unloading our consciences of the burden and discomfort thereof,) with humble confession in our mouths, and serious contrition in our hearts, we should apply ourselves to the God of mercy, deprecating his wrath, and imploring pardon from him; remembering that promise of St. John, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity;* and that declaration of the Wise Man, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*[t] In these and the like cases, God by our necessities doth invite and summons us to come unto him; and no less foolish than impious we are, if we do then slink away, or fly from him. Then we should (as the Apostle to the Hebrews exhorteth) *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,*[u] (or, for seasonable relief.)*

And beside those outwardly prompting and urging us, there be other opportunities, springing from within us, which we are no less obliged and concerned to embrace. When God by his gentle whispers calleth us, or by his soft impulses draweth us into his presence; we should then take heed of stopping our ears, or turning our hearts from him, refusing to hearken or to comply.[v] We must not anywise quench or damp any sparks of devout affection kindled in us by the divine Spirit; we must not repel or resist any of his kindly suggestions or motions.

When ever we find ourselves well affected to, or well framed for devotion; that we have a lively sense of, and a coming appetite to spiritual things; that our spirits are brisk and pure, our fancy calm and clear, our hearts tender and supple, our affections warm and nimble; then a fair season offereth itself; and when the iron is so hot, we should strike.

If at any time we feel any forward inclinations or good dispositions to the practice of this duty, we should never check or curb them, but rather should promote and advance them; pushing ourselves forward in this hopeful career; letting out the stream of our affections into this right channel, that it may run freely therein, that it may overflow and diffuse itself in exuberance of devotion. Farther,

IV. *Praying incessantly* may signify, that we should with assiduous urgency drive on the intent of our prayers, never quitting it, or desisting, till our requests are granted, or our desires are accomplished. Thus doing, we may be said to pray continually: as he that goeth forward in his journey (although he sometime doth bait, sometime doth rest and repose himself,) is said yet to be in travel; or as he that doth not wave the prosecution of his cause (although some demurs intervene,) is deemed still to be in suit. This is that which our Lord did in the Gospel prescribe and persuade, where it is recorded of him, that *He spake a parable unto them, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.*[w] That *praying always*, the ensuing discourse showeth to import restless importunity, and perseverance in prayer: the same which so often is commended to us by the phrases of μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *not to faint*, or *falter*; μὴ παύεσθαι, *not to cease*,

* εἰς εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν.

[r] Psal. lxxvii. 2; xviii. 6; cxlii. 2; cxviii. 5.

[s] 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9.

[t] 1 John i. 9, Prov. xxviii. 13; Psal. xxxii. 5; li. 1, &c.; Job. vii. 20.

[u] Heb. iv. 16.

[v] Jer. xxxv. 15; Prov. i. 24; Isa. l. 2; lxv. 12; lxvi. 4.

[w] Luke xviii. 1.

or give over; *προσκαρτερεῖν, to continue instant*, or hold out stoutly; *ἀγωνίζεσθαι, to strive earnestly*, or contest and struggle in *prayers; προσμένειν ταῖς, δεήσεσι, to abide at supplications; ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει, to watch with all perseverance.*[x] That which also is implied by those terms, which in scriptural style do commonly express devotion: by *seeking God*;[y] which implieth, that God doth not presently, upon any slight address, discover himself in any beneficial effects answerable to our desires, but after a careful and painful continuance in our applications to him: by *waiting upon God*;[z] which signifieth, that if God do not presently appear, granting our requests, we should patiently stay, expecting till he be pleased to do it in his own best time, according to that in the Psalms, *Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us*:[a] by *knocking*; which intimateth that the door of grace doth not ever stand open, or that we can have an effectual access to God, until he, warned, and as it were excited, by our earnest importunity, pleaseth to listen, to disclose himself, to come forth unto us.

And this practice reason also doth enforce. For there are some good things absolutely necessary for our spiritual life and welfare (such as are freedom from bad inclinations, disorderly affections, vicious habits, and noxious errors; the sanctifying presence and influence of God's holy Spirit, with the blessed graces and sweet fruits thereof; growth in virtue, delight in spiritual things, the sense of God's love and favour, with the like,) which good reason engageth us perseveringly to seek, as never to rest or be satisfied till we have acquired them in perfect degree; since we cannot ever do well without them, or ever get enough of them. In begging other inferior things, it may become us to be reserved, indifferent, and modest; but about these matters (wherein all our felicity is extremely concerned) it were a folly to be slack or timorous: as we cannot be said immoderately to desire them, so we cannot be supposed immodestly to seek them there, where only they can be found, in God's presence and hand.* The case doth bear, yea, doth require that we should be eager and hot, resolute and stiff, free and bold, yea, in a manner peremptory and impudent solicitors with God for them. So our Saviour intimateth, where, comparing the manner of God's proceeding with that of men, he representeth one friend yielding needful succour to another, not barely upon the score of friendship, but *διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν, for his impudence;* that is, for his confident and continued urgency, admitting no refusal or excuse.[b] So doth God, in such cases, allow and oblige us to deal with him, being instant and pertinacious in our requests, *giving him no rest*[c] (as the phrase is in the Prophet;) not enduring to be put off, or brooking any repulse; never being discouraged, or cast into despair, by any delay or semblance of neglect. We may *wrestle with God*, like Jacob, and with Jacob may say, *I will not let thee go except thou bless me.*[d] Thus God suffereth himself to be prevailed upon, and is willingly overcome: thus Omnipotence may be mastered, and a happy victory may be gained over Invincibility itself. Heaven sometime may be forced by storm (or by the assults of extremely fervent prayer;) it assuredly will yield to a long siege. God will not ever hold out against the attempt of an obstinate suppliant. So *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*[e] We read in St. John's Gospel of a man, that, being thirty-eight years diseased, did wait at the pool of Bethesda seeking relief: him our Lord pitied and helped, crowning his patience with miraculous relief, and proposing it for an example to us of perseverance. It is said of the Patriarch Isaac, that *he entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was en-*

[x] Col. i. 9; Eph. i. 16; Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2, 12; 1 Tim. v. 5; Eph. vi. 18.

[y] Psal. x. 4; xi. 10; xiv. 2; xxiv. 6; lxiii. 1; lxix. 6, 32; lxx. 4; lxxxiii. 16; Job viii. 5; Deut. iv. 29; Prov. viii. 17; Psal. lxxvii. 6.

[z] Psal. cxxiii. 2; lxix. 3; cxxx. 5; xxxvii. 7; xxv. 5; xxvii. 14; xxxvii. 34; xxv. 21; lii. 9; lix. 9; cxlv. 15; Isa. viii. 17; xl. 31; xlix. 23; Hos. xii. 6; Lam. iii. 25, 26; Prov. xx. 22.

[a] Psal. cxxiii. 2; Luke xii. 36; Matt. vii. 7; *Vide* Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. viii. ad Theod. 2.

* Αἰδὼς οὐκ ἀγαθὴ κεχρημένῳ ἀνδρὶ προΐκτῃ.

[b] Luke xi. 8.

[c] Isa. lxii. 7.

[d] Gen. xxxii. 26.

[e] Matt. xi. 12; John v. 5; *Vide* Chrys. tom. v; Orat. 40, and in Joh. Orat. 36.

treated of him, and Rebecca his wife conceived.[f] Whereupon St. Chrysostom doth observe, that he had persevered twenty years in that petition.[g]

Of good success to this practice we have many assurances in holy Scripture. *The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Blessed are all they that wait for him. None that wait on him shall be ashamed.*[h] *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*[i] So hath God assured by his word, and engaged himself by promise, that he will yield unto constant and patient devotion; so that it shall never want good success.

Without this practice we cannot indeed hope to obtain those precious things; they will not come at an easy rate, or be given for a song; a lazy wish or two cannot fetch them down from heaven. God will not bestow them at first asking, or deal them out in one lump; but it is upon assiduous soliciting, and by gradual communication, that he dispenseth them. So his wise good will, for many special reasons, disposeth him to proceed: that we may (as it becometh and behoveth us) abide under a continual sense of our natural impotence and penury; of our dependence upon God, and obligation to him for the free collation of those best gifts: that by some difficulty of procuring them we may be minded of their worth, and induced the more to prize them: that by earnestly seeking them we may improve our spiritual appetites, and excite holy affections: that by much conversing with heaven our minds may be raised above earthly things, and our hearts purified from sordid desires: that we may have a constant employment answerable to the best capacities of our souls, worthy our care and pain, yielding most solid profit and pure delight unto us: that, in fine, by our greater endeavour in religious practice we may obtain a more ample reward thereof.

For the same reason indeed that we pray at all, we should pray thus with continued instance. We do not pray to instruct or advise God; not to tell him news, or inform him of our wants (*he knows them*, as our Saviour telleth us, *before we ask:*)[j] nor do we pray by dint of argument to persuade God, and bring him to our bent; nor that by fair speech we may cajole him or move his affections toward us by pathetical orations: not for any such purpose are we obliged to pray. But for that it becometh and behoveth us so to do, because it is a proper instrument of bettering, ennobling, and perfecting our souls; because it breedeth most holy affections, and pure satisfactions, and worthy resolutions; because it fitteth us for the enjoyment of happiness, and leadeth us thither: for such ends devotion is prescribed; and constant perseverance therein being needful to those purposes (praying by fits and starts not sufficing to accomplish them,) therefore such perseverance is required of us. Farther,

V. *Praying incessantly* may import, that we do with all our occupations and all occurrences interlace devout ejaculations of prayer and praise; lifting up our hearts to God, and breathing forth expressions of devotion, suitable to the objects and occasions which present themselves. This as it nearly doth approach to the punctual accomplishment of what our text prescribeth, so it seemeth required by St. Paul, when he biddeth us *pray always* ἐν πνεύματι, *in spirit*, and to sing ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, *in the heart*:[k] that is, with very frequent elevations of spirit in holy thoughts and desires toward heaven; with opportune resentments of heart, directing thanks and praise to God. We cannot ever be framing or venting long prayers with our lips, but almost ever our mind can throw pious glances, our heart may dart good wishes upwards; so that hardly any moment (any considerable space of time) shall pass without some lightsome flashes of devotion.* As

[f] Gen. xxv. 21. [g] *Vide* tom. vi. Orat. 68.

[h] Lam. iii. 25; Isa. xxx. 18; xlix. 23; Psal. xxv. 3; xxxvii. 9.

[i] Isa. xl. 31; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Ezra viii. 22; Amos v. 4; 2 Chron. xv. 12; Psal. ix. 10. *Seeking* God, the periphrasis of a religious man. Psal. xiv. 2; xxiv. 6; lxix. 6; lxx. 4; cxix. 2; x. 4.

* Sed non satis perspiciunt quantum natura humani ingenii valeat, quæ ita est agilis et velox, sic in omnem partem (ut ita dixerim) spectat, ut ne possit quidem aliquid agere tantum unum; in plura vero non eodem die modo, sed eodem temporis momento, vim suam impendat. *Quint.* i. 12.

[j] Matt. vi. 8.

[k] Eph. vi. 18; v. 19; Col. iii. 16.

bodily respiration, without intermission or impediment, doth concur in all our actions: so may that breathing of soul, which preserveth our spiritual life, and ventilateth that holy flame within us, well conspire with all other occupations.* For devotion is of a nature so spiritual, so subtle, and penetrant, that no matter can exclude or obstruct it. Our minds are so exceedingly nimble and active, that no business can hold pace with them, or exhaust their attention and activity. We can never be so fully possessed by any employment, but that divers vacuities of time do intercur, wherein our thoughts and affections will be diverted to other matters. As a covetous man, whatever beside he is doing, will be carking about his bags and treasures; an ambitious man will be devising on his plots and projects; a voluptuous man will have his mind in his dishes; a lascivious man will be doting on his amours; a studious man will be musing on his notions; every man, according to his particular inclination, will lard his business, and besprinkle all his actions with cares and wishes tending to the enjoyment of what he most esteemeth and affecteth:† so may a good Christian, through all his undertakings, wind in devout reflections and pious motions of soul toward the chief object of his mind and affection. Most businesses have wide gaps, all have some chinks, at which devotion may slip in. Be we never so urgently set or closely intent upon any work (be we feeding, be we travelling, be we trading, be we studying,) nothing yet can forbid, but that we may together wedge in a thought concerning God's goodness, and bolt forth a word of praise for it; but that we may reflect on our sins, and spend a penitential sigh on them; but that we may descry our need of God's help, and dispatch a brief petition for it: a *God be praised*, a *Lord have mercy*, a *God bless*, or *God help me*, will no wise interrupt or disturb our proceedings.‡ As worldly cares and desires do often intrude and creep into our devotions, distracting and defiling them; so many spiritual thoughts and holy affections insinuate themselves into, and hallow our secular transactions. This practice is very possible, and it is no less expedient: for that if our employments be not thus seasoned, they can have no true life or savour in them; they will in themselves be dead and putrid, they will be foul and noisome, or at least flat and insipid unto us.

There are some other good meanings of this precept, according to which Holy Scripture (backed with good reason,) obligeth us to observe it: but those (together with the general inducements to the practice of this duty) that I may not now farther trespass on your patience, I shall reserve to another opportunity.

SERMON VII.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

1 THESS. v. 17.—*Pray without ceasing.*

WHAT the *prayer* here enjoined by St. Paul doth import, and how by it universally all sorts of devotion should be understood, we did formerly discourse. How, also, according to divers senses (grounded in Holy Scripture, and enforced by good reason,) we may perform this duty *incessantly*, we did then declare; five such senses we did then mention and prosecute: I shall now add two or three more, and press them.

VI. *Praying*, then, *incessantly*, may imply, that we do appoint certain times conveniently distant for the practice of devotion, and carefully observe them. To keep the Jews in a constant exercise of divine worship, God did constitute a sacrifice which was called *Tamidh* (ἡ διαπαντὸς θυσία,) *the continual sacrifice*. And as that sacrifice, being constantly offered at set times, was thence denominated *continual*; so may we, by punctually observing fit returns of devotion, be said to pray *incessantly*.[a]

And great reason there is that we should do so. For we know that all persons, who would not lead a loose and slattering life, but design with good assurance and

* Μνημονευτέον γὰρ Θεοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀναπνευστέον· καὶ εἰ οἷόν τε τοῦτο εἰπεῖν, μηδὲ ἄλλο τι ἢ τοῦτο πρακτέον. Naz. Or. 33.

† *Vide* Chrys. Orat. v. in Annam, tom. v. p. 78, 79.

‡ Εἰπὲ κατὰ διάνοιαν. Ἐλέησόν με, ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἀπήρτισταί σου ἡ εὐχή.—Chrys. *Ibid.*

[a] Dan. viii. 11; Heb. xiii. 5; Neh. x. 33.

advantage to prosecute an orderly course of action, are wont to distribute their time into several parcels; assigning some part thereof to the necessary refection of their bodies, some to the convenient relaxation of their minds, some to the dispatch of their ordinary affairs; some also to familiar conversation, and interchanging good offices with their friends;* considering, that otherwise they shall be uncertain, and *unstable in all their ways.*[b] And in this distribution of time devotion surely should not lack its share: it rather justly claimeth the choicest portion to be allotted thereto, as being incomparably the noblest part of our duty, and mainest concernment of our lives. The feeding our souls and nourishing our spiritual life, the refreshing our spirits with those no less pleasant than wholesome exercises, the driving on our correspondence and commerce with heaven, the improving our friendship and interest with God, are affairs which above all others do best deserve, and most need being secured. They must not, therefore, be left at random, to be done by the bye, as it hitteth by chance, or as the fancy taketh us. If we do not depute vacant seasons, and fix periodical returns for devotion, engaging ourselves by firm resolution, and inuring our minds by constant usage to the strict observance of them, secluding from them, as from sacred enclosures, all other business; we shall often be dangerously tempted to neglect it, we shall be commonly listless to it, prone to defer it, easily seduced from it by the encroachment of other affairs, or enticement of other pleasures. It is requisite that our souls also (no less than our bodies) should have their meals, settled at such intervals as the maintenance of their life, their health, their strength and vigour, do require; that they may not perish or languish for want of timely repasts; that a good appetite may duly spring up, prompting and instigating to them; that a sound temper and robust constitution of soul may be preserved by them.

Prayers are the bulwarks of piety and good conscience, the which ought to be placed so as to flank and relieve one another, together with the interjacent spaces of our life; that the enemy (*the sin which doth so easily beset us*) may not come on between, or at any time assault us, without a force sufficiently near to reach and repel him.[c]

In determining these seasons and measures of time according to just proportion, honest prudence (weighing the several conditions, capacities, and circumstances of each person) must arbitrate. For some difference is to be made between a merchant and a monk, between those who follow a court, and those who reside in a cloister or a college. Some men having great encumbrances of business and duty by necessity imposed on them, which consume much of their time, and engage their thoughts; of them, in reason, neither so frequent recourses to, nor so long continuance in prayer can be demanded, as from those who enjoy more abundant leisure, and freer scope of thoughts. But some fit times all may and must allow, which no avocation of business, no distraction of care, should purloin from them.

Certain seasons and periods of this kind nature itself (in correspondence to her unalterable revolutions) doth seem to define and prescribe: those which the Royal Prophet recommendeth, when he saith, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou Most High: To show forth thy loving-kindness every morning, and thy faithfulness every night.*[d] Every day we do recover and receive a new life from God; every morning we do commence business, or revive it; from our bed of rest and security we then issue forth, exposing ourselves to the cares and toils, to the dangers, troubles, and temptations of the world: then especially, therefore, it is reasonable that we should sacrifice thanks to the gracious preserver of our life, and the faithful restorer of its supports and comforts; that we should crave his direction and help in the pursuit of our honest undertakings; that to his protection from sin and mischief we should recommend ourselves and our affairs; that, by offering up to him the first-fruits of our diurnal labours, we should consecrate and consign them

* Cur ipsi aliquid forensibus negotiis, aliquid desideriis amicorum, aliquid rationibus domesticis, aliquid curæ corporis, nonnihil voluptati quotidie damus?—*Quint.* i. 12.

[b] James i. 8.

[c] Heb. xii. 1. [d] Psal. xcii. 1, 2; lv. 17.

all to his blessing; that as we are then wont to salute all the world, so then chiefly with humble obesiance we should accost him, who is ever present with us, and continually watchful over us. Then also peculiarly devotion is most seasonable, because then our minds being less prepossessed and pestered with other cares, our fancies becoming lively and gay, our memories fresh and prompt, our spirits copious and brisk, we are better disposed for it.

Every night, also, reason calleth for these duties, requiring that we should close our business and wind up all our cares in devotion; that we should then bless God for his gracious preservation of us from the manifold hazards and the sins to which we stood obnoxious; that we should implore his mercy for the manifold neglects and transgressions of our duty, which through the day past we have incurred; that, our minds being then so tired with study and care, our spirits so wasted with labour and toil, that we cannot any longer sustain ourselves, but do of our own accord sink down into a posture of death, we should, as dying men, resign our souls into God's hand, depositing ourselves and our concernments into his custody, who alone *doth never sleep nor slumber*:[e] praying that he would guard us from all the dangers and disturbances incident to us in that state of forgetfulness, and *interregnum* of our reason; that he would grant us a happy resurrection in safety and health, with a good and cheerful mind, enabling us thereafter comfortably to enjoy ourselves, and delightfully to serve him.

Thus if we do constantly bound and circumscribe our days, dedicating those most remarkable breaks of time unto God's service, since beginning and end do comprehend the whole, seeing, in the computation and style of Moses, *evening and morning* do constitute a day; we may with some good congruity be said to pray incessantly.

Especially if, at the middle distance between those extremes, we are wont to interpose somewhat of devotion. For as then usually our spirits, being somewhat shattered and spent, do need a recruit, enabling us to pass through the residue of the day with its incumbent business; so then it would do well, and may be requisite, in a meal of devotion to refresh our souls with spiritual sustenance, drawn from the never-failing storehouse of Divine grace; which may so fortify us, that with due vigour and alacrity we may perform the ensuing duties to God's honour and our own comfort. Thus to practice was the resolution of the Psalmist, that great master of devotion: *Evening* (said he) *and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud.*[f] And this was the custom of the noble Daniel, from which no occasion could divert, no hazard could deter him: *He kneeled* (saith the story) *upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.*[g]

These are times which it is necessary, or very expedient that all men (even persons of highest rank, and greatest employment) should observe. These even of old were the practises of religious persons, not expressly prescribed by God's law, but assumed by themselves; good reason suggesting them to the first practisers, and the consenting example of pious men afterward enforcing them.

God indeed did himself in his Law, or by his Prophets, appoint public and solemn celebrations of worship to himself, in sacrifices (involving prayer and accompanied therewith) constantly to be offered every morning and evening: religious princes also did institute services of thanksgiving and praise to be performed at those times:[h] but there doth not appear any direct institution of private devotion, or its circumstances; but the practice thereof seemeth originally to have been purely voluntary, managed and measured according to the reason, by the choice of each person; yet so, that the practice of eminently good men leading, and others following, it grew into a kind of common law, or standing rule (seeming to carry an obligation with it,) to observe the time specified.

Besides those three times, there were further other middle times observed by devout people, who had leisure and disposition of mind thereto; once between

[e] Psal. cxxi. 4.

[f] Psal. lv. 17. [g] Dan. vi. 10.

[h] 2 Chron. ii. 4; 1 Chron. xvi. 40, 41: xxiii. 30; Ezra iii. 3.

morning and noon, and once between noon and evening were sequestered to that purpose: whence, in the Acts, the ninth hour of the day (that is, the middle interval between noon and evening) is called *the hour of prayer*.[i] Yea, some did impose on themselves the observation of two other times, one between evening and midnight, the other between midnight and morn. To which practice those places in the Psalms do seem to allude: *My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may meditate on thy word.*[j] And plainly the whole number of those times which the Psalmist observed, is expressed in those words: *Seven times a day will I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*[k] Which examples, whoever shall choose to follow (in any measure,) he shall do wisely and commendably; he shall certainly have no cause to repent; he will find it richly worth his while; great benefit and comfort will thence accrue unto him.

If indeed Jews were so liberal in assigning, so punctual in affording such portions of time for yielding praise, and offering supplications unto God; how much more free and ready, more careful and diligent, should we be in this way of practice!—we who have a religion so far more spiritual, and exempt from corporeal encumbrances; precepts so much more express and clear; so much higher obligations and stronger encouragements to this duty!—whom God in especial manner so graciously doth invite, so powerfully doth attract unto himself! But further,

VII. More especially this precept may be supposed to exact from us a compliance in carefully observing the times of devotion ordained by public authority, or settled by general custom.[l] This in a popular and legal sense in doing a thing indesinently, when we perform it so often as is required by law or custom. So the Apostle to the Hebrews saith of *the priests* that *they went always into the tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God;*[m] *always*, that is, at all the solemn times appointed. And thus of the Apostles it is affirmed by St. Luke, that *they were continually in the temple, blessing and praising God;*[n] that is, they constantly resorted thither at the stated times of concourse for prayer. This good reason also plainly doth enjoin; for that the neglecting it is not only a disorderly behaviour in a matter of high consequence; a criminal disregard and disobedience to authority; a scandalous contempt of our neighbours, from whose laudible fashion we discost; a wrongful deserting the public, to whose good, mainly promoted by the public worship of God, we do owe the contribution of our endeavour; but a heinous affront to Almighty God, who thereby is plainly dishonoured, and in a manner openly disavowed; a huge prejudice to religion, the credit and power whereof, without visible profession, exemplary compliance, mutual consent and encouragement, cannot be upheld. Were there times by law or custom defined (as in some places indeed there are,) when all men should be required in person solemnly to attend on their prince, for professing their allegiance, or deferring any homage to him; would not those who should wilfully refuse or decline appearance, be justly chargeable as guilty of dishonouring and wronging him?—would not their such defailance pass for sufficient proof that they do not acknowledge him? that at least they do not much regard or value him? So, by not joining at stated times in celebration of divine worship, we may be well conceived wholly to disclaim God, or greatly to disesteem him; to slight religion as a thing insignificant and unprofitable. Do we not indeed thereby more than intimate, that we little believe God to be our sovereign Lord and Governor; that we stand in no great awe or dread of him; that we are not much sensible of his benefits and mercies; that we repose small trust or hope in him; that we do not take ourselves much to want his protection, his guidance, his assistance, his favour and mercy? Are we not in effect

[i] Acts iii. 1.
[j] Psal. lxiii. 5, 6; cxix. 147, 148.
[k] Psal. cxix. 164.
[l] Levit. xix. 30; xxvi. 2. Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary.
[m] Heb. ix. 6. [n] Luke xxiv. 53.

like to those in Job, who *say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways? What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? or what profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?*[o] Thus the standers-by commonly (some so as to be much offended at, others so as to be corrupted by our bad example,) will interpret this neglect: and so assuredly God himself will take it from us, and accordingly deal with us. As he claimeth this public attendance on him for his due: (*Give*, proclaimeth he by the mouth of one of his great Heralds, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength: Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:*)[p] so if we to his wrong and disgrace refuse to yield it, we shall certainly find answerable resentment and recompense from him: that as we are careless to serve him, so he will be unmindful to bless us; as we are backward to avow and glorify him, so he will not be forward to own and grace us; as we do so *deny him before men*, so *he will deny us before them also.*[q] What other measure indeed can we imagine, or expect to receive? Will God, think we, be so partial and fond to us, so disregardful and injurious toward himself, that he will vouchsafe to appear in favour to us, when we deign not to appear in respect to him? that he will openly tender our repute, when we apparently disregard his honour? that he will employ his wisdom, or exert his power in our behalf, when we scarce will think a thought, or stir a step, for his service? Can we hope that he will freely dispense prosperous success to our enterprises, when we either care not or scorn to implore his help? that he will reach forth undeserved blessings to us, when we subtract due praises from him? that he will any wise show himself bountiful and merciful toward us, when we so palpably are injust and ingrateful toward him? No; *surely he scorneth the scorners;* and *whosoever despiseth him, shall be lightly esteemed:*[r] so he expressly hath threatened; and seeing he is both infallibly true, and invincibly able, we may reasonably presume that he will accomplish his word.

VIII. Lastly, *praying incessantly* may import at large a frequency in devotion. This the words at least do exact or necessarily imply, however expounded. For doing *incessantly* cannot imply less than doing *frequently:* in no tolerable sense can we be said to do that continually, which we do seldom: but it is an ordinary scheme of speech to say that a man doth that always, which he is wont to do, and performeth often. As of the pious soldier Cornelius, it is said, that he *gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway;*[s] and of Anna the prophetess, that she *departed not from the temple, but served God with prayers and fastings night and day;*[t] that is, she frequently resorted to the temple, and served God with an assiduous constancy. As the words may bear, and do involve this sense, so doth the reason of the case enforce it: for very just, very fit, very needful it is, to practise thus. There is ever at hand abundant reason for, and apposite matter of, devotion; therefore no large space of time should pass without it: there be perpetually depending many causes thereof; whence there is not to be allowed any long vacation from it. As every moment, we, from God's mercy and bounty, partake great favours; so should we often render thanks and praise for them: for perpetually to receive courtesies, and rarely to return acknowledgments, is notorious ingratitude and iniquity. We frequently (and in a manner continually) do fall into sins; often therefore we are obliged to confess sins, we are concerned to deprecate wrath, and beg mercy; otherwise we must long crouch under the sore burden of guilt, the sad dread of punishment, the bitter pangs of remorse, or the desperate hazard of stupid obduration. Whatever we design or undertake, toward the good management and happy success thereof, we (being ignorant and impotent creatures) do need the guidance, the assistance, and the blessing of God: so often, therefore, it is requisite that we should be seeking and suing for them; if not, we do not only trans-

[o] Job xxi. 14, 15.
[p] Psal. xxix. 1, 2; lxvi. 2.
[q] 2 Tim. ii. 12; Matt. x. 33; Luke ix. 26; i. 9.
[r] Prov. iii. 34; 1 Sam. ii. 30.
[s] Acts x. 2.
[t] Luke ii. 37.

gress our duties, but fondly neglect or foully betray our own concernments. The causes, therefore, of devotion, being so constant, the effects in some correspondence should be frequent.

Such frequency is indeed necessary for the breeding, the nourishment, the growth and improvement of all piety. Devotion is that holy and heavenly fire, which darteth into our minds the light of spiritual knowledge, which kindleth in our hearts the warmth of holy desires: if, therefore, we do continue long absent from it, a night of darkness will overspread our minds, a deadening coldness will seize upon our affections. It is the best food of our souls, which preserveth their life and health, which repaireth their strength and vigour, which rendereth them lusty and active: if we therefore long abstain from it, we shall starve or pine away; we shall be faint and feeble in all religious performances; we shall have none at all, or a very languid and meagre piety.

To maintain in us a constant and steady disposition to obedience, to correct our perverse inclinations, to curb our unruly passions, to strengthen us against temptations, to comfort us in anxieties and distresses, we do need continual supplies of grace from God; the which ordinarily are communicated in devotion, as the channel which conveyeth, or the instrument which helpeth to procure it, or the condition upon which it is granted. Faith, hope, love, spiritual comfort and joy, all divine graces, are chiefly elicited, expressed, exercised therein and thereby: it is therefore needful that it should frequently be used; seeing otherwise we shall be in danger to fail in discharging our chief duties, and to want the best graces.

It is frequency of devotion also which maintaineth that friendship with God, which is the soul of piety. As familiar conversation (wherein men do express their minds and affections mutually) breedeth acquaintance, and cherisheth goodwill of men to one another, but long forbearance thereof dissolveth or slackeneth the bonds of amity, breaking their intimacy, and cooling their kindness; so is it in respect to God: it is frequent converse with him, which begetteth a particular acquaintance with him, a mindful regard of him, a hearty liking to him, a delightful taste of his goodness, and consequently a sincere and solid good-will toward him; but intermission thereof produceth estrangement or enmity toward him. If we seldom come at God, we shall little know him, not much care for him, scarce remember him, rest insensible of his love, and regardless of his favour; a coldness, a shyness, a distaste, an antipathy toward him, will by degrees creep upon us. Abstinence from his company and presence will cast us into conversations destructive or prejudicial to our friendship with him; wherein soon we shall contract familiarity and friendship with his enemies (the world and the flesh,) which are inconsistent with love to him, which will dispose us to forget him, or to dislike and loathe him.

It is, in fine, the frequency of devotion which alone can secure any practice thereof, at least any practice thereof duly qualified; so hearty, so easy, so sweet and delightful as it should be. We have all a natural averseness or indisposition thereto, as requiring an abstraction of thoughts and affections from sensible things, and a fastening them upon objects purely spiritual; a rearing our heavy spirits above their common pitch; a staying and settling our roving fancies; a composing our vain hearts in a sober and steady frame, agreeable to devotion: to effect which things is a matter of no small difficulty and pain; which therefore, without much use and exercise, cannot be accomplished; but with it, may: so that by frequent practice, the bent of our heart being turned, the strangeness of the thing ceasing, the difficulty of the work being surmounted, we shall obtain a good propension to the duty, and a great satisfaction therein.

This will render the way into God's presence smooth and passable; removing, as all other obstacles, so particularly those of fear and doubt in respect to God, which may deter or discourage us from approaching to him. God being most holy and pure, most great and glorious, we, sensible of our corruption and vileness, may be fearful and shy of coming near unto him. But when, coming into his presence, we do find, that *such as his majesty is, such is his mercy;* when we do *taste and see that the Lord is good;* when by experience we feel, that *in his*

presence there is fulness of joy; being *abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house;* having our souls there *satisfied as with marrow and fatness;* finding, that *a day in his courts is better than a thousand* spent otherwhere;[u] perceiving that he biddeth us welcome, that he treateth us kindly, that he sendeth us away refreshed with sweetest comforts, and rewarded with most excellent benefits; this will not only reconcile our hearts to devotion, but draw us into a cordial liking and earnest desire thereof; such as the Psalmist expresseth, when he saith, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*[v] This will engage us into strong resolutions of constantly practising it; such as the same holy person again declareth in these words: *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*[w] Hence, instead of a suspicious estrangedness, a servile dread, or an hostile disaffection toward God, there will spring up an humble confidence, a kindly reverence, a hearty love toward him; which will upon all occasions drive us to him, hoping for his friendly succour, longing after his kind embraces. So will the frequency of devotion render it facile and pleasant. Whereas, on the contrary, disuse thereof will make it at any time hard and irksome; strengthening and increasing our natural averseness thereto: performing it seldom, we shall never perform it well, with that attention, that affection, that promptitude, that willingness and alacrity, which are due thereto.

According to so many senses, in so many respects, may we, and should we, observe this precept. From thus praying continually there can be no good exception or just excuse. The most common pleas that will be alleged for the omission thereof are two; one drawn from external avocations, the other from internal indispositions obstructing it; both of which are so far from being good, that being scanned, they will soon appear serving rather to aggravate than to excuse or abate the neglect.

I. I cannot, saith one, now attend to prayers, because I am not at liberty, or at leisure, being urgently called away, and otherwise engaged by important affairs. How much a flam this apology is, we shall presently descry, by asking a few questions about it.

1. Do we take devotion itself to be no business, or a business of no consideration? Do we conceit, when we pay God his debts, or discharge our duties toward him, when we crave his aid or mercy, when we solicit the main concernments of our soul (yea, of our body also and its estate,) that we are idle or misemployed; that we lavish our time, or lose our pains?

2. What other affairs can we have of greater moment or necessity than this? Can there be any obligation more indispensable than is that of yielding due respect and service to our Maker, our great Patron, our most liberal Benefactor? Can there be any interest more close or weighty than this, of providing for our soul's eternal health and happiness? Is not this, indeed, the great work, *the only necessary matter*, in comparison whereto all other occupations are mere trifling, or unprofitable fiddling about nothing?[x] What will all other business signify, what will come of it, if this be neglected? Busy we may be, we may plod, we may drudge eternally; but all to no end. All our care is in effect improvidence, all our industry may be well reckoned idleness, if God be not served, if our souls are not secured.

3. If we survey and prize all worldly businesses, which among them will appear so importunate as to demand, so greedy as to devour, so worthy at least as to deserve all our time, that we cannot spare a few minutes for maintaining our most pleasant intercourse, and most gainful commerce with heaven? What are the great businesses of the world? what but scraping and scrambling for pelf, contriving and compassing designs of ambition, courting the favour and respect of men, making provision for carnal pleasure, gratifying fond curiosity or vain humour? And do any of these deserve to be put into the scale against, shall all

[u] Psal. xxxiv. 8; xvi. 11; xxxvi. 8; lxiii. 5; lxxxiv. 10. [v] Psal. lxxxiv. 2.
[w] Psal. cxvi. 1, 2.

[x] Luke x. 24; Job xxiii. 12.—Αἱ τέχναι τῶν πιστῶν ἐπέργειά εἰσιν· ἔργον δὲ ἡ Θεοσέβεια.—Const. Apost. ii. 61.

of them together be able to sway down, our spiritual employments? Shall these images, these shadows of business, supplant or crowd our devotion; that which procureth wealth inestimably precious, pleasure infinitely satisfactory, honour incomparably noble above all this world can afford? If the expense of time be, as the Philosopher said, πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα, *the most precious expense* that can be;[y] how can it be better laid out than upon the worthiest things, such as devotion alone can afford the purchase and possession of? True virtue, sound wisdom, a quiet conscience, and steady tranquillity of mind, the love and favour of God, a title unto endless joy and bliss, are purely the gifts of heaven; and thence they will not descend of themselves, but prayer must fetch them down. If nothing then, in the world be comparable to those things, how can any time be so well spent as in prayer, which acquireth them; which also best secureth whatever we have, and is the readiest way to procure whatever we want?

4. Should we not farther, honestly comparing things, easily discern, that it is no such indispensable business, but rather indeed some base dotage on lucre, some inveigling bait of pleasure, some bewitching transport of fancy, that crosseth our devotion? It is not often a complimental visit, an appointment to tattle or to tipple, a match for sport, a wild ramble in vice or folly, that so deeply engageth us to put off our duty?

5. Yea, is it not commonly sloth rather than activity, an averseness from this, rather than an inclinaion to any other employment, which diverteth us from our prayers? Is not, I say, the true reason why we pray so seldom, not because we are very busy, but because we are extremely idle; so idle, that we cannot willingly take the pains to unscrew our affections from sensible things, to reduce our wandering thoughts, to compose our hearts into a right frame, to bend our untoward inclinations to a compliance with our duty? Is it not because we do not feel that savour and satisfaction in these, which we do in other trivial and worthless employments, nor will be at the trouble to work such dispositions in our souls? Do we not betake ourselves to other conversations and commerces merely for refuge, shunning this intercourse with God and with ourselves? These, I fear, are oftener the real causes of our neglecting devotion, than any such mighty avocations which we pretend.

6. But were there, indeed, not only a counterfeit or imaginary, but a real competition between devotion and other lawful business, which, in reason, should carry it; in conscience, which of the two should be forborne or suspended? Is it not evidently better, that the pursuit of our temporal interests, whatever they be, should be a little checked, than that our affairs of everlasting consequence should be quite laid aside? that we should venture a small impairing of our estate, than surely endamage our souls? that we hazard to disappoint or displease a man, than dare to affront and offend the Almighty God?

7. Were it not strangely absurd and unhandsome to say, I cannot wait on God, because I must speak with a friend; I cannot go to church, although God calleth me thither, because I must haste to market; I cannot stand to pray, because I am to recieve money, or to make up a bargain; I cannot discharge my duty to God, because a greater obligation than that doth lie upon me? How unconceivable an honour, how unvaluable a benefit is it, that the incomprehensibly great and glorious Majesty of heaven doth vouchsafe us the liberty to approach so near unto him, to converse so freely with him, to demand and derive from his hand the supply of all our needs, and satisfaction of all our reasonable desires? and is it then just or seemly, by such comparisons to disparage his favour, by such pretences to baffle with his goodness?

Put the case our prince should call for us to speak with him about matters nearly touching his service and our welfare: would it be according unto duty, discretion, or decency, to reply, that we are at present busy, and have no leisure, and must therefore hold ourselves excused; but that, if he will stay awhile, at another time, when we have less to do, we shall be perhaps disposed to wait upon him? The case is propounded by our Lord in that parable, wherein God is represented as a great man that had prepared a feast, and invited many guests there-

[y] Theophr.

to; but they excused themselves: *One said, that he had purchased land, and must needs go out to see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and must go to prove them; another had married a wife, and therefore could not come.*[z] These indeed were affairs considerable, as this world hath any; but yet the excuses did not satisfy: for, notwithstanding, the great person was angry, and took the neglect in huge disdain.*

8. Moreover, if we reflect what vast portions of time we squander away upon our petty matters, upon voluptuous enjoyments, upon fruitless pastimes, upon impertinent talk; how can we satisfy ourselves in not allotting competent time for God's service, our own salvation, and the future everlasting state? Doth not he, who with the continuance of our life bestoweth on us all our time, deserve that a pittance of it should be reserved for himself? Can all the world duly claim so great an allowance thereof? May not our soul (which is far our noblest part, which indeed is all ourselves) justly challenge a good share of our time to be expended on it? or shall this mortal husk engross it all? Must eternity, which comprehendeth all time, have no time belonging to it, or allotted for its concernments?

9. Again, is it not great imprudence so to lay our business, that any other matter shall thwart or thrust out devotion? Easily, with a little providence may things be so ordered, that it, without interfering or justling, may well consist with all other both needful business and convenient divertisement; so that it shall neither obstruct them, nor they extrude it: and are we not very culpable, if we do not use so much providence?†

10. In truth, attending upon devotion can be no obstacle, but will be great furtherance to all other good business. It is the most sure, most pleasant, most advantageous and compendious way of transacting affairs to mix prayers and praises with them; it is the best oil that can be, to make the wheels of action go on smoothly and speedily: it not only sanctifieth our undertakings, but much promoteth and exceedingly sweeteneth the management of them. For the conscience of having rendered unto God his due respect and service, of having entrusted our affairs to his care, of having consequently engaged his protection and assistance for us, will dispose us to do things with a courageous alacrity and comfortable satisfaction; will fill us with a good hope of prospering; will prepare us however to be satisfied with the event, whatever it shall be; will in effect procure a blessing and happy success, such as we may truly rejoice and triumph in, as conferred by God in favour to us. Whereas, neglecting these duties, we can have no solid content or savoury complacence in anything we undertake: reflecting on such misbehaviour (if we be not downright infidels, or obdurate reprobates in impiety) will quash or damp our courage; having thence forfeited all pretence to God's succour, and provoked him to cross us, we must needs suspect disappointment: as we have no reasonable ground to hope for success, so we cannot, if success arriveth, be heartily satisfied therein, or take it for a blessing.

He therefore that is such a niggard of his time, that he grudgeth to withhold any part thereof from his worldly occasions, deeming all time cast away that is laid out in waiting upon God, is really most unthrifty and prodigal thereof: by not sparing a little, he wasteth all his time to no purpose; by so eagerly pursuing, he effectually setteth back his designs; by preposterously affecting to dispatch his affairs, he rendereth them endless, or, which is the same, altogether unprofitable.

In fine, we may be sure that no time is spent even so prudently and politicly, with so great advantage and so real fruit to ourselves, as that which is employed upon devotion. In sacrificing his time, his pains, his substance, anything he hath or can do, to God's service, no man can be a loser.

We have also many examples plainly demonstrating the consistency of this practice with all other business. Who ever had more or greater affairs to manage, and who ever managed them with greater success, than David; upon whom

* Ἔπειτα ὅτι σκῆψις ταῦτα καὶ πρόφασις, &c.—Chrys. in Joh. Orat. 11.

† Πρῶτον μὲν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἔγκλημα οὐ μικρὸν, τὸ κυκλοῦσθαι τοσούτων πραγμάτων πλήθει, καὶ τοῖς βιωτικοῖς οὕτω προσηλῶσθαι διὰ παντὸς, ὡς μηδὲ μικρὰν εἰς τὰ πάντων ἀναγκαιότερα ἄγειν σχολήν.—Chrys. in Joh. i. 14. (Or. 11.)

[z] Matt. xxii. 2, &c.; Luke xiv. 16, &c.

did lie the burden of a royal estate, and the care over a most populous nation; the which *he fed with a faithful and true heart, and ruled prudently with all his power;*[a] who waged great wars, vanquished mighty enemies, achieved many glorious exploits, underwent many grievous troubles? Yet could not such engagements distract or depress his mind from a constant attendance on devotion: *I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be continually in my mouth. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.*[b] So he declareth his resolution and his practice. Who is more pressingly employed than was Daniel, first president over so vast a kingdom, chief minister of state to the greatest monarch on earth? Yet constantly *thrice a day did he pray and give thanks unto his God.*[c] Who can be more entangled in varieties and intricacies of care, of pains, of trouble, than was he that prescribeth unto us this rule of praying continually? Upon him did lie *the care of all the churches; night and day with labour and toil did he work* for the sustenance of his life, *that he might not* (to the disparagement of the Gospel) *burden any man;*[d] perpetually he was engaged in all sorts of labour and travail, ever conflicting with perils, with wants, with inconveniences numberless: yet did he exactly conform his practice to his rule, being no less indefatigable and incessant in his devotion, than he was in his business. Whoever managed a greater empire than Constantine? Yet *every day* (as Eusebius reporteth) *at stated times, shutting himself up, he alone privately did converse with his God.** The most pious men, indeed, have never been idle or careless men, but always most busy and active, most industrious in their callings, most provident for their families, most officious toward their friends, most ready to serve their country, most abundant in all good works; yet have they always been most constant in devotion. So that experience clearly doth evidence, how reconcileable much devotion is to business; and that consequently the prosecution of the one cannot well palliate the neglect of the other.

II. No better can any man ward himself from blame, by imputing the neglect of devotion to some indisposition within him thereto. For this is only to cover one fault with another, or to lay on a patch more ugly than the sore. It is, in effect, to say we may sin, because we have a mind to it, or care not to do otherwise. Our indisposition itself is criminal; and, as signifying somewhat habitual or settled, is worse than a single omission: it ought, therefore, to be corrected and cured; and the way to do it is, by setting presently upon the practice of the duty, and persisting resolutely therein: otherwise how is it possible that it should ever be removed? The longer we forbear it, the more seldom we perform it, the stronger surely will our indisposition grow, and the more difficult it will be to remove it. But if (with any degree of seriousness and good intention) we come indisposed to prayer, we may thereby be formed into better disposition, and by continual attendance thereon, we shall (God's grace co-operating, which never is wanting to serious and honest intentions) grow toward a perfect fitness for it: prayer by degrees will become natural and delightful to us.

* Καιροῖς ἐκάστης ἡμέρας τακτοῖς ἑαυτὸν ἐγκλείων, μόνος μόνῳ τῷ αὐτῷ προσωμίλει Θεῷ.—Euseb. de Vita Const. iv. 22.

[a] Psal. lxxviii. 72.

[b] Psal. xxxiv. 1; lxxi. 6; cxlv. 2; xxxv. 28; lxi. 4.

[c] Dan. vi. 10.

[d] 2 Cor. xi. 28; 2 Thess. iii. 8.

SERMON VIII.

OF THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. v. 20.—*Giving thanks always for all things unto God.*

THESE words, although (as the very syntax doth immediately discover) they bear a relation to, and have a fit coherence with, those that precede, may yet (especially considering St. Paul's style and manner of expression in the perceptive and exhortative part of his Epistles,) without any violence or prejudice on either hand, be severed from the context, and considered distinctly by themselves.[a] And (to avoid encumbrance by farther

[a] *Vide* Rom. xii. Eph. vi., &c.

comparison (so taking them, we may observe, that every single word among them carries with it something of notable emphasis and especial significancy. The first [*Giving thanks*] expresses the substance of a duty, to which we are exhorted. The next (I mean, in order of construction) [*to God*] denotes the object or term to which it is directed. The following [*always*] determines the main circumstance of this and all other duties, the time of performance. The last [*for all things*] declares the adequate matter of the duty, and how far it should extend. These particulars I shall consider severally, and in order.

I. First, then, concerning the duty itself, *to give thanks*, or rather *to be thankful* (for εὐχαριστεῖν doth not only signify *gratias agere*, *reddere*, *dicere*, to *give*, *render*, or *declare thanks*, but also *gratias habere*, *grate affectum esse*, to be *thankfully disposed*, to entertain a grateful affection, sense, or memory: in which more comprehensive notion I mean to consider it, as including the whole duty or virtue of gratitude due to Almighty God for all his benefits, favours, and mercies;) I say, concerning this duty itself (abstractedly considered,) as it involves a respect to benefits or good things received; so in its employment about them it imports, requires, or supposes these following particulars:—

1. It implies a right apprehension of, and consequently a considerate attention unto, benefits conferred. For he that is either wholly ignorant of his obligations, or mistakes them, or passes them over with a slight and superficial view, can nowise be grateful. *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doings. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have pleasure therein. O taste* (first, and then) *see that the Lord is good.*[b]

This is the method that great master of thanksgiving prescribes: first experimental notice, then wise consideration, then grateful sense, then public acknowledgment. And those we find both by him and by the Prophet Isaias (in the very same words) reprehended as wickedly ingrateful persons, who *regarded not the work of the Lord, nor considered the operation of his hands.*[c] 'Tis part, therefore, of this duty incumbent on us, to take notice of, diligently and carefully to consider, the divine benefits; not to let them pass undiscerned and unregarded by us, as persons either wofully blind, or stupidly drowsy, or totally unconcerned.

'Tis a general fault, that the most common and frequent, the most obvious and conspicuous favours of God (like the ordinary phenomena of nature, which, as Aristotle observes, though in themselves most admirable, are yet least admired,)the constant rising of the sun upon us, the descent of fruitful showers, the recourse of temperate seasons, the continuance of our life, the enjoyment of health, the providential dispensation of wealth, and competent means of livelihood, the daily protection from incident dangers, the helps of improving knowledge, obtaining virtue, becoming happy, and suchlike most excellent benefits, we commonly little mind or regard, and consequently seldom return the thanks due for them. Possibly some rare accidents of providence, some extraordinary judgment, some miraculous deliverance, may rouse and awaken our attention (as it is said of the Israelites, *When he slew them, then they sought him—and remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer;*)[d] but such advertency is not the effect so much of gratitude, as of curiosity or of necessity: the notable rarity invites, or some powerful impulse commands our notice; but the truly grateful industriously design, and are studious to know thoroughly their obligations, that they may be able to render answerable returns for them.

2. This duty requires a faithful retention of benefits in memory, and consequently frequent reflections upon them.* For he that is no longer affected with a benefit than it incurs the sense, and suffers not itself to be disregarded, is far from being grateful; nay, if we believe the philosopher, is ingrateful in the worst kind, and highest degree. For, *ingratus*

[b] Psal. cvii. 43; lxiv. 9; cxi. 2; xxxiv. 8.

* Ἀχάριστος ὅστις εὖ παθὼν ἀμνημονεῖ.

[c] Psal. xxviii. 5; Isa. v. 12.

[d] Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35.

est, saith he, *qui beneficium accepisse se negat, quod accepit; ingratus est, qui dissimulat; ingratus, qui non reddit: ingratissimus omnium, qui oblitus est.*[e] *He that falsely denies the reception of a benefit, and he that dissembles it, and he that doth not repay it, is ingrateful; but most ingrateful of all is he that forgets it.* It is a sign the benefit made no deep impression on his mind, since it left no discernible footsteps there; that he hardly ever thought of making recompense, since he hath suffered himself to become altogether uncapable of doing it; neither is there any hope of his amending the past neglect; no shame, no repentance, no fair occasion can redeem him from ingratitude, in whom the very remembrance of his obligation is extinguished.

If to be sensible of a present good turn deserved the title of gratitude, all men certainly would be grateful: the Jews questionless were so. When Almighty God, by his wonderful power in extraordinary ways, delivered them from the tyranny and oppression of their prevalent enemies; when he caused streams to gush forth from the bowels of a hard rock, to refresh their thirst; when bread descended from heaven in showers, and the winds were winged with flesh, to satisfy their greedy desires; then surely they were not altogether unsensible of the divine goodness; then could they acknowledge his power, and be forward enough to engage themselves in promises of correspondent observance toward him for the future. But the mischief was, immediately after, as the Psalmist complains, *They forgot his works, and the wonders he had showed them: They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.* They *refused to obey, neither were mindful of the wonders that God did among them*, as Nehemiah confesses in their behalf. *Of the Rock that begat them were unmindful, and forgot the God that formed them*, as it is in Deuteronomy.[f] They distrusted his promises, repined at his dealings, disobeyed his laws, and treacherously apostatized from his covenant. Such were the fruits of their ingrateful forgetfulness; which therefore that people is so often charged with, and so sharply reproved for by the Prophets.

On the contrary, we find that great pattern of gratitude, the royal Prophet David, continually revolving in his thoughts, imprinting upon his fancy, studying and meditating upon, recollecting and renewing in his memory, the results of divine favour. *I will remember* (saith he) *thy wonders of old; I will meditate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings:* and, *I remember the days of old; I will meditate on all thy works; I muse on the works of thy hands:* and, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:* and, *My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, because thou hast been my help.*[g] No place unfit, it seems, no time unseasonable for the practice of this duty; not the place designed for rest, not the time due to sleep, but, as David thought, more due to a wakeful contemplation of the divine goodness. Whose vigilant gratitude we should strive to imitate, devoting our most solitary and retired, our most sad and serious thoughts (not the studies only of our closet, but the consultations also of our pillow) to the preservation of those blessed ideas; that neither length of time may deface them in our fancy, nor other care thrust them out thence.

It was a satirical answer (that of Aristotle,) and highly opprobrious to mankind; who being asked, *Τί τάχιστον γηράσκει; What dost the soonest grow old?* replied, *Χάρις, Thanks:* and so was that adagial verse, *Ἅμ' ἠλέηται, καὶ τέθνηκεν ἡ χάρις· No sooner the courtesy born, than the resentment thereof dead.* Such reproachful aphorisms we should labour to confute, especially as they are applicable to the divine favours, by so maintaining and cherishing our thanks for them, that they neither decay with age, nor prematurely die, nor be buried in oblivion; but may resemble the pictures and poetical descriptions of the Graces, those goodly daughters of heaven, smiling always with a never-fading seren-

[e] Sen. iii. de Benef. cap. 1.

[f] Psal. lxxviii. 11, 42; Neh. ix. 17; Deut. xxxii. 18.

[g] Thy loving-kindness is ever before mine eyes, Psal. xxvi. 3; lxxxvii. 11, 12; cxliii. 5; ciii. 2; lxiii. 5, 6, 7.

ity of countenance, and flourishing in an immortal youth.'

The middle, we may observe, and the safest, and the fairest and the most conspicuous places in cities, are usually deputed for the erections of statues and monuments dedicated to the memory of worthy men, who have nobly deserved of their countries. In like manner should we, in the heart and centre of our soul, in the best and highest apartments thereof, in the places most exposed to ordinary observation, and most secure from the invasions of worldly care, erect lively representations of, and lasting memorials unto, the divine bounty; constantly attending to which we may be disposed to gratitude. Not one blessing, not the least favourable passage of providence, ought to perish with us, though long since past, and removed out of the sphere of present sense.

We must not in our old age forget who formed us in the womb,[h] who brought us into the light, who suckled our infancy, who educated our childhood, who governed our youth, who conducted our manhood through the manifold hazards, troubles, and disasters of life. Nor in our prosperity, our affluence of good things, our possession of Canaan, should we be unmindful of him who relieved us in our straits, who supplied our wants, sustained our adversity, who redeemed us from Egypt, and led us through the wilderness.[i] A succession of new and fresh benefits should not (as among some savages the manner is for the young to make away the old) supplant and expunge ancient ones, but make them rather more dear and venerable to us. Time should not weaken or diminish, but rather confirm and radicate in us the remembrance of God's goodness; to render it, as it doth gold and wine, more precious and more strong. We have usually a memory more than enough tenacious of injuries and ill turns done to us: let it never be said, to the disgrace of that noble faculty, that we can hardly forget the discourtesies of man, but not easily remember the favours of God. But further,

3. This duty implieth a due esteem and valuation of benefits; that the nature and quality, the measure and quantity, the circumstances and consequences of them, be well expended; else the gratitude is like to be none, or very defective. For we commensurate our thankfulness, not so much to the intrinsic excellency of things, as to our peculiar estimations of them A cynic, perhaps, would not return more thanks for a diamond than for a pebble; nor more gratefully receive a talent of gold, than an ounce of copper; because he equally values, or rather alike contemns both.

Wherefore we find our (never-to-be-forgotten) example, the devout thanksgiver, David, continually declaring the great price he set upon the divine favours; admiring and displaying their transcendent perfections, their wonderful greatness, their boundless extension, their excessive multitude, their endless duration, their advantageous circumstances (the excellent needfulness, convenience, and seasonableness of them; together with the admirable freeness, wisdom, and power of the Benefactor, shining forth in and by them.) *I will praise thee, O Lord* (saith he) *among the people, I will sing unto thee among the nations: for thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.* And, *Remember the marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth. He is the Lord our God, his judgments are in all the earth.* And again, *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God!* And, *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord! O how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.* And again, *his work is honourable and glorious, his righteousness endureth for ever:* and, *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works:* and, *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.*[j]

In such manner ought we diligently to survey and judiciously to estimate the effects of divine beneficence, examining

[h] Psal. lxxi. 6.

[i] Deut. vi. 12; viii. 11.

[j] Psal. cviii. 3, 4; cv. 5, 7; xxxvi. 5, 6, 7; cxxxix. 17, 18; cxi. 3; cxlv. 9; lxviii. 19.

every part, and descanting upon every circumstance thereof: like those that contemplate some rare beauty, or some excellent picture; some commending the exact proportions, some the graceful features, some the lively colours discernible therein. There is not the least of the divine favours, which, if we consider the condescensive tenderness, the clear intention, the undeserved frankness, the cheerful debonairity expressed therein, hath not dimensions larger than our comprehension, colours too fair, and lineaments too comely for our weak sight thoroughly to discern; requiring therefore our highest esteem and our utmost thanks.

'Tis perhaps somewhat dangerous to affix a determinate value upon any of God's benefits (for to value them seems to undervalue them, they being really inestimable:) what, then, is it to extenuate, to vilify, to despise the greatest? We should esteem them, as we measure the heavens with our eye, as we compute the sands upon the shore, as we would prize inexhaustible mines of gold, and treasures of pearl; that is, by confessing heartily their worth surpasses the strength of our imagination to conceive, and of our speech to utter; that they are immense, innumerable, unconceivable, and unexpressible. But still,

4. *Giving thanks* imports, that benefits be received with a willing mind, a hearty sense, a vehement affection. The forementioned particulars are indeed necessary properties, inseparable concomitants, or pre-requisite conditions to; but a cheerful and cordial acceptance of benefits is the form, as it were, and soul, the life and spirit, the principal and most essential ingredient, of this duty.

It was not altogether unreasonable, though it went for a paradox, that dictate of the Stoics, that *animus sufficit animo*, and that *qui libenter accepit, beneficium reddidit:* that he who with a willing and well-affected mind receives a courtesy, hath fully discharged the duty of gratitude; that other endeavours of return and compensation are rather handsome accessions to it, than indispensably requisite to the completion thereof. For, as in the collation it is not the gold or the silver, the food or the apparel, in which the benefit consists, but the will and benevolent intention of him that bestows them; so reciprocally it is the good acceptance, the sensibleness of, and acquiescense in the benefactor's goodness, that constitutes the gratitude; which who affords, though he be never capable of yielding other satisfaction, *voluntate voluntati satisfecit;* and, *regum æquavit opes animo* ——. It is ingenuity that constitutes (respectively) both a bountiful giver, and a thankful receiver. A truly noble benefactor purely aimeth at not any material reward, or advantage to himself (it were trading this, not beneficence;) but the good profit and content of him to whom he dispenseth his favour: of which being assured, he rests satisfied, and accounts himself royally recompensed.*

Such a benefactor is Almighty God, and such a tribute he requires of us; a ready embracement of, and a joyful complacency in his kindness; even such as he expressed, who said, *Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee:* and, *My soul shall be filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:* and, *I will praise thee with my whole heart: I will be glad and rejoice in thee:* and, *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name.*[k]

No holocaust is so acceptable to God as a heart enflamed with the sense of his goodness. He loves not only ἱλαρὸν δότην (*a merry giver,*) but ἱλαρὸν δέκτην (*a cheerful receiver*) also.[l] He would have us, as to desire his favour with a greedy appetite, so to taste it with a savoury relish. He designs not only to *fill* our mouths with *food*, but *our hearts* also *with gladness.*[m]

We must not seem to grudge or repine, to murmur or disdain, that we are necessitated to be beholden to him; lest it happen to us as it did to them of whom it

* Quoties quod proposuit quis consequitur, capit operis sui fructum. Qui beneficium dat, quid proponit sibi? prodesse ei cui dat, et sibi voluptati esse: non sibi invicem reddi volut; aut non fuit beneficium, sed negotiatio. Beneficii proprium est, nihil de reditu cogitare.—*Senec.*

Nec est dubium quin is qui liberalis benignusque dicitur, officium non fructum, sequatur. —*Cic. de Leg.* i.

[k] Psal. lxiii. 3; civ. 33; lxxi. 22; lxiii. 5; ix. 1, 2; ciii. 1.

[l] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

[m] Acts xiv. 17.

is said, *While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them.*[n] Yea, 'tis our duty not to be contented only, but to be delighted, to be transported, to be ravished with the emanations of his love: to entertain them with such a disposition of mind as the dry and parched ground imbibes the soft dew and gentle showers; as the chill and darksome air admits the benign influences of heavenly light; as the thirsty soul takes in the sweet and cooling stream. He that with a sullen look, a dead heart, a faint sense, a cold hand, embraces the gift of heaven, is really unthankful, though with deluges of wine and oil he makes the altars to overflow, and clouds the sky with the steam of his sacrifices. But yet further,

5. This duty requires due acknowledgment of our obligation, significations of our notice, declarations of our esteem and good acceptance of favours conferred. It is the worst and most detestable of ingratitudes, that which proceeds from pride and scorn: and such is he guilty of, who is either unwilling or ashamed to confess himself obliged; who purposely dissembles a benefit, or disavows the benefactor; who refuses to render those most manifestly due, and most easily* discharged, those neither toilsome nor expensive oblations of praise and acknowledgment. This part of our duty requires, that we offer to God, not costly hecatombs, but the *calves* only *of our lips*[o] (as the Prophet Hosea speaks,) not the fruit of our lands, but *καρπὸν χειλέων* only (as the Apostle to the Hebrews styles it,) *the fruit of our lips, confessing to his name;*[p] that we employ some few blasts of the breath he gave us on the celebration of his goodness, and advancement of his repute. *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that hath horns or hoofs,*[q] saith David.

And surely it is the least homage we in gratitude owe, and can pay to Almighty God, to avow our dependence upon and obligation to him for the good things we enjoy, to acknowledge that his favours do deserve thanks, to publish to the world our experience of his goodness, to proclaim solemnly with the voice of thanksgiving his most deserved praise; resembling him who abounds in such expressions as these: *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will I make known his faithfulness to all generations. I will publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all his wondrous works. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. I have not hid thy righteousness in my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*[r]

Thus if a grateful affection live in our hearts, it will respire through our mouths, and discover itself in the motion of our lips. There will be a conspiracy and faithful correspondence between our mind and our tongue: if the one be sensible, the other will not be silent; as, if the spring works, the wheels will turn about, and the bell not fail to speak. Neither shall we content ourselves in lonesome tunes, and private soliloquies, to whisper out the divine praises; but shall loudly excite and provoke others to a melodious consonance with us. We shall, with the sweet singer of Israel, cite and invoke heaven and earth; the celestial choir of angels; the several estates and generations of men, the numberless company of all the creatures, to assist and join in concert with us, in celebrating the worthy deeds, and magnifying the glorious name of our most mighty Creator, of our most bountiful Benefactor.

Gratitude is of a fruitful and diffusive nature, of a free and communicative disposition, of an open and sociable temper: it will be imparting, discovering, and propagating itself: it affects light, company, and liberty; it cannot endure to be smothered in privacy and obscurity. Its best instrument therefore is speech,

* Οὐδὲ γὰρ βαρύ τι καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ἐπιζητεῖ παρ' ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ ὁμολογεῖν μόνον τὰς τοσαύτας εὐεργεσίας, καὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ τούτων αὐτῷ εὐχαριστίας ἀναφέρειν.—Chrys. tom. i. page 51.

[n] Plal. lxxviii. 30, 31.

[o] Hos. xiv. 2. [p] Heb. xiii. 15, ὁμολογούντων.

[q] Psal. lxix. 30, 31.

[r] Psal. lxxxix. 1; xxvi. 7; cxlv. 5; xl. 10. *Vide* Psal. lxvi. 5, O come hither, and behold the works of God, &c.

that most natural, proper, and easy mean of conversation, of signifying our conceptions, of conveying, and as it were transfunding our thoughts and passions into each other.* This, therefore, *glory of ours*,[s] and best *organ* that we have (as the Psalmist seems to call it,) our tongue, we should in all reason devote to the honour, and consecrate to the praise of him who made it, and who conserves it still in tune.

And, the farther to provoke us, we may consider that it hath been the manner prompted by nature, and authorized by general practice, for men of all nations, and all times, and all ways, by composed hymns and panegyrical elogies, to express their gratitude for the gifts of nature, and for the benefits indulged by providence; in their public sacrifices and solemn festivities extolling the excellent qualities of their imaginary deities, and reciting the famous achievements of their heroes and supposed benefactors: to whose favourable help and blessing, in their conceit, they owed the fruits of the earth, the comforts of life, the defence and patronage of their countries: being indeed mistaken in the object, but not transgressing in the substance of the duty; paying a due debt, though to false creditors. And I wish we were as ready to imitate them in the one, as we are, perhaps, prone to blame them for the other. For, certainly, acknowledgments of the divine goodness, and solemn testifications of our thankful sense thereof (whatever the abused world may now imagine,) was always, is now, and ever will be, the principal and most noble part of all religion immediately addressed to God. But moreover,

6. This duty requires endeavours of real compensation, and a satisfactory requital of benefits, according to the ability and opportunity of the receiver:[t] that we do not only verbally *dicere*, and *agnoscere*; but really *agree*, and *referre gratias*: that to him, who hath by his beneficence obliged us, we minister reciprocal assistance, comfort, and relief, if he need them, and be capable to receive them; however, by evident testimonies to discover our ready disposition to make such real returns; and withal, to suit our actions to his good liking, and in our carriage to comply with his reasonable desires. For, *as the earth which drinketh the rain often coming upon it*,[u] *and* having been by great labour tilled, and manured with expense, *yieldeth*, yet no *meet herbage*, or *fruit agreeable to the expectation of him that dresseth it*,* but is either wholly barren, or *produceth* only *thorns and briers, is* (as the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us,) *to be reprobated, and nigh unto cursing;* that is, deserves no farther care or culture to be employed on it, and is to be reputed desperately worthless: so is he (that we may apply an *apodosis* to the Apostle's comparison,) who, daily partaking the influences of divine providence and bounty, affords no answerable return, to be accounted execrably unthankful, and unworthy of any further favour to be showed toward him.

'Tis true, our *righteousness* (or *beneficence*, so the word there signifies) *doth not extend unto God;*[w] his benefits exceed all possibility of any proportionable requital: he doth not need, nor can ever immediately receive any advantage from us: we cannot enrich him with our gifts, who by unquestionable right, and in unalterable possession, is Lord and Master of all things that do actually or can possibly exist; nor advance him by our weak commendations, who already enjoyeth the supreme pitch of glory; nor any way contribute to his in itself complete and indefectible beatitude. Yet we may by apposite significations declare our willingness to serve and exalt him: we may by our obsequious demeanour highly please and content him: we may, by our charity and benignity to those whose good he tenders, yield (though not an adequate, yet) an acceptable return to his benefits. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?*[x] saith David, in way of counsel and deliberation: and thereupon resolves, *I will take the cup*

* Ψυχὴ γὰρ, οἶμαι, ψυχῇ καὶ πνεῦμα πνεύματι συναπτόμενα κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου σποράν, &c.—Clem. Alex. Strom. i. p. 270.

[s] Psal. lvii. 8.

[t] 1 Sam. xii. 24. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.

* εὔθετον βοτάνην.

[u] Heb. vi. 7, 8.

[w] Psal. xvi. 2.

[x] Psal. cxvi. 12.

of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord: I will pay my vows unto the Lord.[y] Seasonable benedictions, officious addresses and faithful performance of vows, he intimates to bear some shadow at least, some resemblance of compensation. And so did his wise son likewise, when he thus advised, *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thy increase.*[z]

Almighty God, though he really doth, and cannot otherwise do, yet will not seem to bestow his favours altogether *gratis*, but to expect some competent return, some small use and income from them. He will assert his rightful title, and be acknowledged the chief proprietary, by signal expressions of our fealty, and the payment of some though inconsiderable quit-rent, for our possessions derived from him: he will rather himself be seemingly indigent, than permit us to be really ingrateful. For knowing well that our performance, of duty, and respect toward him greatly conduceth to our comfort and happiness,* he requireth of us such demonstrations of them, as we conveniently are able to exhibit: he appoints services expressive of thankfulness, exacts tributes and customs, demands loans and benevolences, encourages and accepts free will offerings from us. *Thou shall not appear empty before the Lord,*[a] was a statute to the Jews, qualified and moderated by certain measures: the first-fruits of their lands, the first-born of their cattle and of themselves, the tenths of their annual increase, and a certain allotment from the spoils acquired in wars, did God challenge to himself, as fitting recompenses due for his bounty and care over them. Neither did the Gentiles conceive themselves exempted from the like obligation. For the ἀκροθίνια the *top* or *chief of their corn heaps*, they were wont to consecrate unto him who had blessed their fields with increase; and the ἀκρόλεια, *the first and best of the prey*, they dedicated to the adornment of his temple by whose favourable disposal they had obtained the victory. Neither would they sooner begin their meal, and partake of their necessary refreshment, than, by pouring forth their gratulatory libation, they had performed some homage to heaven for it:

——οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
Πρὶν πιέειν, πρὶν λεῖψαι ὑπερμενέϊ Κρονίωνι,[b]

was the custom, it seems, in Homer's time. I shall not insist upon their ἀναθήματα, their anniversary or their casual sacrifices; but only observe (what, if seasonable, might by many sufficient testimonies be evinced,) that those men (at least the most intelligent of them) were not so senseless as to imagine, that the gods, to whom they performed those services, and devoted those oblations, did any wise need, or were truly benefited by them; but that they esteemed it a comely thing, by the most significant means they could invent, to declare their greateful sense of the divine goodness and indulgence toward them.*

And though we are, perhaps, disobliged now from the circumstantial manner, yet are we nowise freed from (but rather more strongly engaged to) the substantial performance of this sort of gratitude, We are to offer still, not dead *bulls and goats*, but (as St. Paul saith) *our own bodies, living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.*[c] We are excused from material, but are yet bound to yield πνευματικὰς θυσίας, *spiritual sacrifices* unto God,[d] as St. Peter tells us. We must burn incense still, that of fervent devotion; and send up continually to heaven θυσίαν ἰῆς αἰνέσεως, that *thank-offering of praise*,[e] which the Apostle to the Hebrews mentions. We must consecrate the first-born of our souls (pure and holy thoughts,) and the first-fruits of our strength (our most active endeavours,) to God's service. We must slay our impure desires, mortify our corrupt affections, and abandon our selfish respects for his sake. We must give him our hearts, and present our wills entirely to his disposal.† We must vow to him, and pay

* Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀνενδεὴς οὖσα, οὐδενὸς ἑτέρου προσδεῖται· οἱ δὲ αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν, αὐτοὶ λαμπρότεροι γίνονται.—S. Chrys. in Psal. cxliv. p. 885, Savil.

[y] Psal. cxvi. 13, 14.

[z] Prov. iii. 9.

[a] Exod. xxiii. 15.

* *Vide* Platonis Alcib. ii.—Οὐ γὰρ, οἶμαι, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ τῶν θεῶν, ὥστε ὑπὸ δώρων παράγεσθαι, οἷον κακὸν τοκιστὴν, &c.

† Μία ἀμοιβὴ κυριωτάτη παρὰ ἀνθρώπων, ταῦτα δρᾶν ἅπερ ἀρεστὰ τῷ Θεῷ.—Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 511.

[b] *Hom. Il.* H. ad finem.

[c] Rom. xii. 1.

[d] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

[e] Heb. xiii. 15.

the daily oblation of sincere obedience. We must officiously attend his pleasure, and labour to content him by an innocent and unblemished conversation. With these things Almighty God is effectually gratified; he approves of and accepts these, as real testimonies of our thankfulness, and competent returns of his benefits.

Especially our charity and beneficence, our exhibiting love and respect to good men (his faithful servants and near relations,) our affording help and succour to persons in need and distress, he accounts a suitable retaliation of his kindness, acknowledges to be an obligation laid upon himself, and hath by settled rules and indispensable promises obliged himself to requite them. For, *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, he will pay him again:* and, *God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister:* and, *To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased:*[f] and, *I desire fruit,* saith St. Paul to the Philippians, *that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.* And, *Inasmuch as ye have done it to* (that is, fed and clothed, and comforted) *the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,*[g] saith our Saviour; manifestly declaring, that the good we do, and the respect we show unto good and needy men, God reckons it done unto himself.

And this point I shall conclude with the sayings of the wise Hebrew philosopher Ben-Sirach:—*He that keepeth the law, bringeth offerings enough; He that taketh heed to the commandment, offereth a peace-offering. He that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine flour: and he that giveth alms, sacrificeth praise. To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord: and to forsake unrighteousness, is a propitiation:*[h] To these I shall only add this one particular:

7. That true gratitude for benefits is always attended with the esteem, veneration, and love of the benefactor. Beneficence is a royal and godlike thing, an argument of eminent goodness and power conspiring; and necessarily, therefore, as in them that perceive and duly consider it, it begets respect and reverence; so peculiarly in those that feel its benign influence, it produces love and affection: like the heavenly light, which to all that behold it appears glorious; but more powerfully warms those who are directly subject to its rays, and is by them more vigorously reflected.

And as to those that are immediately concerned therein, it imports more particular regard and good-will; so, if they be duly sensible thereof, it engages them in mutual correspondence to an extraordinary esteem and benevolence: such as David upon this account professes to have been in himself toward God, and frequently excites others to. *I will love thee, O Lord my strength. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised. The Lord liveth and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*[i] And (in the Gospel,) *Because her sins, being many, were forgiven, therefore she loved much.*[k] So true it is, that sense of favour indulged is naturally productive of love.*

Thus have I plainly and simply presented you with what my meditations suggested concerning the nature and substance of this duty, with the several branches sprouting from the main stock thereof: I proceed now to that which will exceedingly enlarge the worth, and engage to the performance thereof.

II. The object and term to which it is to be directed: we are to give thanks *to God. To God*, I say; that is, *to him*, unto whom we are obliged, not for some small and inconsiderable trifles, but for the most weighty and valuable benefits; from whom we receive, not few or some, but all good things; whatever is necessary for our sustenance, convenient for our use, pleasant for our enjoyment; not only those that come immediately from

[f] Prov. xix. 17; Heb. vi. 10; xiii. 16.
[g] Phil. iv. 17, 18; Matt. xxv. 40.
[h] Ecclus. xxxv. 1, 2, 3.

* Ἔστιν χάρις γὰρ τὴν χάριν τίκτουσ' ἀεί..—Soph.
[i] Psal. xviii. 1, 3, 46; cxvi. 1.
[k] Luke vii. 47.

his hand, but what we obtain from others, who from him receive both the will and the power, the means and the opportunities, of doing us good; to whom we owe, not only what we ever did or do at present possess, or can hereafter hope for of good; but that we were, are, or shall ever be in capacity to receive any; to the author, upholder, and preserver of our being; without whose goodness we had never been, and without whose care we cannot subsist one moment.

To him who is the Lord and true owner of all things we partake of; whose air we breathe, whose ground we tread on, whose food sustains us; whose wholly we are ourselves, both the bodies we carry about us (which is *the work of his hands*,) and the soul we think with, which was breathed from his mouth.

To him who hath created a whole world to serve us, a spacious, a beautiful, a stately world for us to inhabit and to disport in; who hath subjected so fair a territory to our dominion, and consigned to our use so numerous a progeny of goodly creatures, to be managed, to be governed, to be enjoyed by us.

So that wherever we direct our eyes, whether we reflect them inward upon ourselves, we behold his goodness to occupy and penetrate the very root and centre of our beings; or extend them abroad toward the things about us, we may perceive ourselves inclosed wholly, and surrounded with his benefits. At home we find a comely body framed by his curious artifice, various organs fitly proportioned, situated, and tempered for strength, ornament, and motion, actuated by a gentle heat, and invigorated with lively spirits, disposed to health, and qualified for a long endurance; subservient to a soul endued with divers senses, faculties, and powers, apt to inquire after, pursue, and perceive various delights and contents. To the satisfaction of which all extrinsical things do minister matter and help; by his kind disposal, who furnishes our palates with variety of delicious fare, entertains our eyes with pleasant spectacles, ravishes our ears with harmonious sounds, perfumes our nostrils with fragrant odours, cheers our spirits with comfortable gales, *fills our hearts with food and gladness*, supplies our manifold needs, and protects us from innumerable dangers.

To him who hath inspired us with immortal minds, and impressed upon them perspicuous characters of his own divine essence; hath made us, not in some superficial lineaments, but in our most intimate constitution, to resemble himself, and to partake of his most excellent perfections; an extensive knowledge of truth, a vehement complacency in good, a forward capacity of being completely happy (according to our degree and within our sphere.) To which blessed end by all suitable means (of external ministry and interior assistance) he faithfully conducts us; revealing to us the way, urging us in our process, reclaiming us when we deviate; engaging us by his commands, soliciting us by gentle advices, encouraging us by gracious promises; instructing us by his holy word, and admonishing us by his loving spirit.

To him who vouchsafes to grant us a free access unto, a constant intercourse and a familiar acquaintance with himself; to esteem and style us his *friends* and *children;* to invite us frequently, and entertain us kindly with those most pleasant delicacies of spiritual repast; yea, to visit us often at our home, and (if we admit) to abide and dwell with us; indulging us the enjoyment of that presence, wherein the life of all joy and comfort consists, and to behold the light of his all-cheering countenance.

Is there anything more? Yes: *To him* who, to redeem us from misery, and to advance our estate, hath infinitely debased himself, and eclipsed the brightness of his glorious majesty; not disdaining to assume us into a near affinity, yea, into a perfect union with himself; to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, to undergo the laws and conditions of humanity, to appear in our shape, and converse, as it were, upon equal terms with us, and at last to taste the bitter cup of a most painful and disgraceful death for us.

Yea, *to him* who not only descended from his imperial throne, became a subject, and (which is more) a servant for our sake; but designed thereby to exalt us to a participation of his royal dignity, his divine nature, his eternal glory and bliss; submitting crowns and sceptres

to our choice; crowns that cannot fade, and sceptres that can never be extorted from us.

Farther yet, *To him*, the excellent quality, the noble end, the most obliging manner of whose beneficence doth surpass the matter thereof, and hugely augment the benefits; who, not compelled by any necessity, not obliged by any law (or previous compact,) not induced by any extrinsic arguments, not inclined by our merits, not wearied with our importunities, not instigated by troublesome passions of pity, shame, or fear (as we are wont to be;) not flattered with promises of recompense, nor bribed with expectation of emolument, thence to accrue unto himself; but being absolute master of his own actions, only both lawgiver and counsellor to himself, all-sufficient, and incapable of admitting any accession to his perfect blissfulness; most willingly and freely, out of pure bounty and good will, is our Friend and Benefactor; preventing not only our desires, but our knowledge; surpassing not our deserts only, but our wishes, yea, even our conceits, in the dispensation of his inestimable and unrequitable benefits; having no other drift in the collation of them, beside our real good and welfare, our profit and advantage, our pleasure and content.

To him who not lately began, or suddenly will cease, that is either uncertain or mutable in his intentions, but from everlasting designed, continues daily, and will (if we suffer him) to all eternity persevere unmoveable in his resolutions to do us good.

To him whom no ingratitude, no undutiful carriage, no rebellious disobedience of ours, could for one minute wholly remove, or divert from his steady purpose of caring for us: who regards us, though we do not attend to him; procures our welfare, though we neglect his concernments; employs his restless thought, extends his watchful eye, exerts his powerful arm, is always mindful, and always busy to do us good; watching over us when we sleep, and remembering us when we forget ourselves: in whom yet 'tis infinite condescension to think of us, who are placed so far beneath his thoughts; to value us, who are but dust and dirt; not to despise and hate us, who are really so despicable and unworthy. For *though he dwelleth on high*, saith the Psalmist truly and emphatically, *he humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth.*[l]

To him that is as merciful and gracious, as liberal and munificent toward us; that not only bestows on us more gifts, but pardons us more debts, forgives us more sins, than we live minutes; that with infinite patience endures, not only our manifold infirmities and imperfections, but our petulant follies, our obstinate perversenesses, our treacherous infidelities; overlooks our careless neglects and our wilful miscarriages; puts up with the exceedingly many outrageous affronts, injuries, and contumelies continually offered to his supreme majesty by us base worms, whom he hath always under his feet, and can crush to nothing at his pleasure.

To him yet who, as St. James saith, *giveth freely, and upbraideth no man*;[m] who calls us neither very frequently nor over strictly to accounts; who exacts of us no impossible, no very difficult, no greatly burdensome or costly returns: being satisfied with the cheerful acceptance of his favours, the hearty acknowledgments of his goodness, the sincere performance of such duties, to which our own welfare, comfort, and advantage (rightly apprehended) would otherwise abundantly dispose us.

To him, lastly, whose benefits to acknowledge is the greatest benefit of all; to be enabled to thank whom deserves our greatest thanks; to be sensible of whose beneficence, to meditate on whose goodness to admire whose excellency, to celebrate whose praise, is heaven itself and paradise, the life of angels, the quintessence of joy, the supreme degree of felicity.

In a word, *To him* whose benefits are immensely great, innumerably many, unexpressibly good and precious. For, *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise?*[n] saith he, who had employd often his most active thoughts and his utmost endeavours thereupon, and was incomparably better able to do it. To this God, to this great, to this only Benefactor of

[l] Psal. cxiii. 5, 6. [m] James i. 5.
[n] Psal. cvi. 2.

ours, we owe this most natural and easy, this most just and equal, this most sweet and pleasant duty of giving thanks. To whom, if we wilfully refuse, if we carelessly neglect to pay it, I shall only say thus much, that we are not only monstrously ingrateful, and horribly wicked, but abominably foolish, and deplorably miserable. I shall repeat this sentence once again, and wish it may have its due effects upon us: To this great, to this only Patron and Benefactor of ours, if we do not in some measure discharge our due debt of gratitude for his inestimable benefits and mercies, we are to be adjudged not only most prodigiously unthankful, most detestably impious, but most wofully stupid also and senseless, most desperately wretched and unhappy.

I should now proceed to consider the circumstance of time determined in the word *always;* and the extension of the matter implied in those words, *For all things:* and then to subjoin some farther inducements or arguments persuasive to the practice of this duty. But the time (and, I fear, your patience) failing, I shall reserve them to some other opportunity.

SERMON IX.

ON THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. v. 20.—*Giving thanks always for all things unto God.*

HAVING formerly discoursed upon these words, I observed in them four particulars considerable: 1. The substance of a duty, to which we are exhorted, to *give thanks;* 2. The term unto which it is directed, *to God;* 3. The circumstance of time determined in that word *always;* 4. The extent of the matter about which the duty is employed, *for all things.* Concerning the two former particulars, wherein the duty consisted, and wherefore especially related unto God, I then represented what did occur to my meditation.

III. I proceed now to the third, the circumstance of time allotted to the performance of this duty, expressed by that universal and unlimited term, *always.*

Which yet is not so to be understood, as if thereby we were obliged in every instant (or singular point of time) actually to remember, to consider, to be affected with, and to acknowledge the divine benefits: for the deliberate operations of our minds being sometimes wholly interrupted by sleep, otherwhile preoccupied by the indispensable care of serving our natural necessities, and with attendance upon other reasonable employments, it were impossible to comply with an obligation to the performance of this duty so interpreted. And those maxims of law, *Impossibilium nulla est obligatio*, and, *Quæ rerum natura prohibentur, nulla lege confirmata sunt* (that is, *No law or precept can oblige to impossibilities,*) being evidently grounded upon natural equity, seem yet more valid in relation to his laws, who is the judge of all the world, and in his dispensations most transcendently just and equal.

We may therefore observe, that the Hebrews are wont (in way of synecdoche, or grammatical hyperbole) so to use words of this kind, that their universal importance ought to be restrained by the quality or circumstances of the matter about which they converse. As when our Saviour saith, *Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake;*[o] *all* is not to be taken for every singular person (since there were some that loved our Saviour, and embraced the evangelical doctrine,) but for many, or the most. And when David saith, *There is none that doeth good;*[p] he seemeth only to mean, that in the general corruption of his times there were few righteous persons to be found. And so *for ever* is often used, not for a perpetual and endless, but for a long and lasting duration; and *always*, not for a continual unintermitted state of being, or action, but for such a perseverance as agrees to the condition of the thing to which it is applied.

'Tis for instance, prescribed in Exodus, that Aaron should *bear the judgment of the children of Israel* (the Urim and Thummim) *upon his heart before the Lord continually;*[q] that is (not in absolute and rigorous acceptation continually, but) constantly ever when he went into the holy place to discharge the pontifical function, as the context declares. And our Saviour in the Gospel saith of him-

[o] Matt. x. 22. [p] Psal. xiv. 1.
[q] Exod. xxviii. 30.

self, *Ἐγὼ πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα, I always taught in the temple;*[r] that is, very often, and ever when fit occasion was presented. And the Apostles immediately after Christ's ascension, *ἦσαν διαπαντὸς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, were*, as St. Luke tells us, *continually in the temple, praising and blessing God;*[s] that is, they resorted thither constantly at the usual times or canonical hours of prayer. In like manner, those injunctions (of nearest affinity) of *rejoicing*, of *giving thanks always*, and particularly of *praying without ceasing*[t] (as I have shown more largely in another discourse,) are to be taken in a sense so qualified, that the observance of them may be at least morally possible.

Thus far warrantably we may limit the extension, and mollify the rigour of this seemingly boundless term; but we can hardly allow any farther restriction, without destroying the natural signification, or diminishing the due emphasis thereof. As far, therefore, as it is possible for us, we must endeavour always to perform this duty of gratitude to Almighty God: and consequently,

1. Hereby is required a frequent performance thereof: that we do often actually meditate upon, be sensible of, confess and celebrate, the divine beneficence. For what is done but seldom or never (as we commonly say,) cannot be understood as done always, without a *catachresis*, or abuse of words too enormous. As, therefore, no moment of our life wants sufficient matter, and every considerable portion of time ministers notable occasion of blessing God; as he allows himself no spacious intervals or discontinuances of doing us good: so ought we not to suffer any of those many days (vouchsafed by his goodness) to flow beside us, void of the signal expressions of our dutiful thankfulness to him; nor to admit in our course of life any long vacations from this duty. If God incessantly, and through every minute, demonstrates himself gracious unto us; we in all reason are obliged frequently and daily to declare ourselves grateful unto him.

So at least did David (that most eminent example in this kind, and therefore most apposite to illustrate our doctrine, and to enforce the practice thereof;) for, *Every day* (saith he) *I will bless thee; I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*[u] *Every day;* the heavenly bodies did not more constantly observe their course, than he his diurnal revolutions of praise: every day in his calendar was as it were festival, and consecrated to thanksgiving. Neither did he adjudge it sufficient to devote some small parcels of each day to this service; for, *My tongue* (saith he) *shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long:* and again, *My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof.*[v] The benefits of God he apprehended so great and numerous, that no definite space of time would serve to consider and commemorate them. He resolves therefore elsewhere to bestow his whole life upon that employment: *While I live I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being:* and, *I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*[w] No man can reasonably pretend greater impediments, or oftener avocations from the practice of this duty, than he, upon whom the burden of a royal estate, and the care of governing a populous nation, were incumbent: yet could not they thrust out of his memory, nor extinguish in his heart, the lively sense of divine goodness; which (notwithstanding the company of other secular encumbrances) was always present to his mind, and, like a spirit (excluded from no place by any corporeal resistance), did mingle with and penetrate all his thoughts, and affections, and actions. So that he seems to have approached very near to the complete performance of this duty, according to the extremity of a literal interpretation, and to have been always, without any intermission, employed in giving thanks to God. The consideration, methinks, of so noble a pattern, adjoined to the evident reasonableness of the duty, should engage us to the frequent practice thereof.*

[r] John xviii. 20. [s] Luke xxiv. 53.
[t] 1 Thes. v. 16, 17, 18; Eph. vi. 18; Luke xviii. 1.

* Εἰ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀνὴρ μυρίαις βαπτιζόμενος φροντίσι, καὶ παντοχόθεν περιελκόμενος, τοσαυτάκις παρεκάλει τὸν Θεὸν τινα ἂν ἔχοιμεν ἀπολογίαν ἢ συγγνώμην ἡμεῖς, τοσαύτην σχολὴν ἄγοντες, καὶ μὴ συνεχῶς αὐτὸν ἱκετεύοντες, &c.—Chrys. tom. v. p. 76.

[u] Psal. cxlv. 2.
[v] Psal. xxxv. 28; lxxi 8, 15, 24.
[w] Psal. cxlvi. 2; civ. 33; xxxiv. 1; lxxi. 6.

But if the consideration of this excellent example do not, yet certainly that may both provoke us to emulation, and confound us with shame, of Epictetus, a heathen man, whose words to this purpose seem very remarkable: *Εἰ γὰρ νοῦν εἴχομεν* (saith he in Arrian's Dissert. *ἄλλο τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν, καὶ κοινῇ, καὶ ἰδίᾳ, ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον, καὶ εὐφημεῖν, καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας; οὐκ ἔδει καὶ σκάπτοντας, καὶ ἀροῦντας, καὶ ἐσθίοντας ἄδειν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν Θεόν, Μέγας ὁ Θεὸς,*[x] &c. that is, in our language, *If we understood ourselves, what other thing should we do, either publicly or privately, than sing hymns to, and speak well of God, and perform thanks unto him? ought we not, when we were digging, or ploughing, or eating, to sing a* (suitable) *hymn to him?* Great is God, in that he hath bestowed on us those instruments wherewith we till the ground: Great is God, because he hath given us hands, a throat, a belly; that we grow insensibly, that sleeping we breathe. Thus* (proceeds he) *should we upon every occurrence celebrate God, and superadd of all the most excellent and most divine hymn, for that he hath given us the faculty of apprehending and using these things orderly. Wherefore, since most men are blind and ignorant of this, should there not be some one, who should discharge this office, and who should for the rest utter this hymn to God? And what can I, a lame* (and decrepit) *old man, do else than celebrate God? Were I indeed a nightingale, I would do what belongs to a nightingale; If a swan, what becomes a swan: but since now I am endued with reason, I ought to praise God. This is my duty and concernment, and so I do; neither will I desert this employment, while it is in my power; and to the same song I exhort you all.* Thus that worthy philosopher, not instructing us only, and exhorting with pathetical discourse, but by his practice inciting us to be continually expressing our gratitude to God.

And although neither the admonition of prophets, nor precepts of philosophers, nor the examples of both, should prevail; yet the precedents, methinks, of dumb and senseless creatures should animate us thereto; which never cease to obey the law imposed on them by their Maker, and without intermission glorify him. For, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*[y] It is St. Chrysostom's argumentation[z]: *Καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν ἂν εἴη,* (saith he,) *τὸν λογικὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων ἁπάντων τιμιώτερον, ἔλαττον τῆς κτίσεως φέρειν κατὰ τὸν τῆς εὐφημίας γόγον· οὐκ αἰσχρὸν δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄτοπον,* &c. *It were an ugly thing, that man, endued with reason, and the most honourable of all things visible, should in rendering thanks and praise be exceeded by other creatures: neither is it only base, but absurd. For how can it be otherwise, since other creatures every day and every hour send up a doxology to their Lord and Maker? For,* The heavens declare the glory of God, &c.

If the busy heavens are always at leisure, and the stupid earth is perpetually active in manifesting the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Creator; how shameful is it, that we (the flower of his creation, the most obliged, and the most capable of doing it) should commonly be either too busy, or too idle to do it; should seldom or never be disposed to contribute our endeavours to the advancement of his glory? But,

2. *Giving thanks always* may import our appointing, and punctually observing, certain convenient times of performing this duty; that is, of serious meditation upon, and affectionate acknowledgment of the divine bounty. We know that all persons, who design with advantage to prosecute an orderly course of action, and would not lead a tumultuary life, are wont to distinguish their portions of time, assigning some to the necessary refections of their body, others to the divertisement of their minds, and a great part to the dispatch of their ordinary business: otherwise (like St. James's *double-minded*

* Πάντα τοίνυν τὸν βίον ἑορτὴν ἄγοντες, πάντη πάντοθεν παρεῖναι τὸν Θεὸν πεπεισμένοι, γεωργοῦμεν αἰνοῦντες, πλέομεν ὑμνοῦντες κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην πολιτείαν ἐντέχνως ἀναστρεφόμεθα.—Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 517.

[x] Lib. i. cap. 17.

[y] Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

[z] In Psal. c. liv.

man) they would be *unstable in all their ways*;[a] they would ever fluctuate in their resolutions, and be uncertain when, and how, and to what, they should apply themselves. And so, this main concernment of ours, this most excellent part of our duty, if we do not depute some vacant seasons for it, and observe some periodical recourses thereof, we shall be tempted often to omit it: we shall be listless to do it, apt to defer it, and easily diverted from it by the encroachments of other less-behoving affairs.

The Jews, to preserve them in the constant exercise of this duty, had instituted by God a sacrifice called תמיד (*juge*) rendered by the Greek translators, ἡ διαπαντὸς θυσία, *the continual sacrifice*;[b] to which the divine author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to allude, when in these words he exhorts: Δι' αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διαπαντὸς τῷ Θεῷ· *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually* (or the continual sacrifice of praise), *the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.*[c] As that sacrifice, therefore, being offered constantly at a set time, was thence denominated *continual*; so perhaps may we, by constantly observing some fit returns of praise and thanksgiving, be said *always* to *give thanks.*

In determining the seasons and proportions of which, what other rule or standard can we better conform to, than that of the royal Prophet? I shall not urge his example so much (according to which we should be obliged to a greater frequency;) for, *seven times a day* (saith he) *do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments*;[d] but rather allege his general direction and opinion, proposed to us in those words of his: *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou Most High; to show forth thy loving-kindness every morning, and thy faithfulness every night.*[e] *It is a good thing*; that is, a seemly, a convenient, a commendable, a due performance: *every morning*; that is, when our spirits, being recreated with sleep, are become more vigorous, our memories more fresh, our fancies more quick and active: *to show forth thy loving-kindness*; that is, from a hearty sense of our obligation, to acknowledge the free bounty of him, who in pursuance of his former kindness, hath been pleased to accumulate new favours to us; to guard us by his watchful care, when we were buried, as it were, in a senseless ignorance, and total neglect of our own welfare; to raise us from that temporary death, and to confer a new life upon us, restoring us to our health, to our means of subsistence, to all the necessary supports, and the desirable comforts of life: *every night* also; that is, when our spirits are exhausted with action, and our minds tired with thoughtfulness; when we are become weary, not of doing only, but almost of being; we should conclude our toils, and wrap up our cares in the sweet sense and grateful memory of his goodness, who hath protected us so many hours from the manifold dangers, and more sins, to which, by our weakness, and our folly, and our bad inclinations, we are through every minute exposed; and withal hath provided us so easy and so delightful a means of recovering our spent activity, of repairing our decayed strength. Thus if we constantly begin, and thus close up, thus bound and circumscribe, our days, dedicating those most remarkable periods of time to blessing God, and *making*, as the Psalmist speaks, *the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice*[f] in him (since beginning and ending do in a manner comprehend the whole; and the morning and evening, in Moses's computation and style, do constitute a day;) we may (not incongruously) be supposed and said to *give thanks always.* But yet farther, this may import,

3. A vigilant attendance upon this duty, such as men bestow on their employments, whereof, though the actual prosecution ceases, yet the design continually proceeds. As we say, such a one is writing a book, building a house, occupying a piece of land, though he be at that present peradventure sleeping, or eating, or satisfying some other desire; because his design never sleeps, and his purpose persists uninterrupted. And thus, it seems, we are to understand our Sav-

[a] James i. 8. [b] Dan. viii. 11.
[c] Heb. xiii. 15. [d] Psal. cxix. 54.
[e] Psal. xcii. 1, 2; lv. 17.
[f] Psal. lxv. 8.

iour and the Apostles, when they exhort us προσκαρτερεῖν, to *continue instant in prayer and thanksgiving*, and ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει, to *watch with all perseverance*; and γρηγορεῖν, to *wake in thanksgiving*; and μὴ παύεσθαι, *not to give over giving thanks*: and to perform these duties ἀδιαλείπτως, *incessantly*, or *without giving off*; μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *not to grow worse, faint*, or *falter* (which is, in that place, made equivalent to, explicatory of, doing duty always.)[g] Which expressions denote a most diligent attendance on these duties; that we may make them not a πάρεργον, a diversion or by-business of our lives, allowing only a perfunctory and desultorious endeavour on them; but esteem them a weighty business, to be pursued with steadfast resolution and unwearied industry.

As our beings and powers did proceed from the goodness, so the results of them naturally tend to the glory, of God; and the deliberations of our will ought to conspire with the instincts of our nature; it should be the principal design which our intention should aim at, and our endeavour always drive on, to glorify our Maker;—which doing, we may be reputed to discharge this duty, and in some sense said *always* to *give thanks*. But farther,

4. This term [*always*] doth necessarily imply a ready disposition, or habitual inclination, to give thanks, ever permanent in us: that our *hearts*, as David's was, be *fixed* always[h] (that is, fittingly prepared, and steadily resolved) to thank and *praise* God; that our affections be like tinder, though not always inflamed, yet easily inflammable by the sense of his goodness.

'Tis said of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful, and lendeth*:[i] not for that he doth ever actually dispense alms, or furnish his poor neighbour with supplies; but because his mind is ever inclinable to do it, when need requires. So a grateful man doth *always give thanks*, by being disposed to do it upon all fit occasions. 'Tis the habit that qualifies and denominates a man such or such in any kind or degree of morality. A good man is in Scripture frequently compared to a *tree bringing forth fruit in due season*; and the root thereof is this habitual disposition, which, being nourished by the dew of heaven, and quickened by the benign influence of divine grace, sprouts forth opportunely, and yields a plentiful increase of good fruit. Though we cannot always sing, our organs may be always rightly tuned for praise; at least they should never be unstrung, and wholly out of kelter.

We should maintain in ourselves a constant good temper of mind, that no opportunity surprise, and find us unprepared to entertain worthily the effects of divine favour: otherwise we shall as well lose the benefit, as God the thanks and glory due to them. That we be always thus disposed, is not impossible, and therefore requisite. But moreover,

5. Lastly, *Giving thanks always*, imports that we readily embrace every opportunity of actually expressing our thankfulness. For so, what in some places of Scripture is enjoined to be done *continually* and *without ceasing*, is in others only required to be done upon all opportunities. Which shows, that πάντοτε is to be expounded, not so much, ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ, *at all times*, as ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, *in every season*. So προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι, *praying upon every opportunity in your spirit*:[k] and Ἀγρυπνεῖτε οὖν ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι, *Be watchful, praying in every season*.[l] And this sense seems probably to be chiefly intended by this apostle, wherever he hath (as he hath often) this expression, πάντοτε εὐχαριστεῖν, that we embrace every overture or fit occasion of giving thanks.

'Tis true, no time is unseasonable to do it: every moment we receive favours, and therefore every minute we owe thanks: yet there are some especial seasons that do more importunately require them. We should be like those trees that bear fruit (more or less) continually; but then more kindly, and more abundantly, when more powerfully cherished by the heavenly warmth.

When any fresh, any rare, any remarkable benefit happens to us; when prosperous success attends our honest endeavours; when unexpected favours fall

[g] Rom. xii. 12; Eph. vi. 18; Col. iv. 2; Eph. i. 16; 1 Thess. v. 17; Luke xviii. 1.
[h] Psal. cviii. 1. [i] Psal. xxxvii. 26.
[k] Eph. vi. 18. [l] Luke xxi. 36.

as it were of their own accord into our bosoms; like the grain in the golden age springing up ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα, without our care or our toil, for our use and enjoyment; when we are delivered from straits in our apprehension inextricable, surmount difficulties seeming insuperable, escape hazards (as we suspected) inevitable; then is a special season presented us of offering up the sacrifice of praise to the God of mercy, help, and victory.

When we revolve in our minds (as we should often do) the favourable passages of providence, that in the whole course of our lives have befallen us: how in our extreme poverty and distress (when perhaps no help appeared, and all hopes seemed to fail us,) God hath raised us up friends, who have commiserated, comforted, and succoured us; and not only so, but hath changed our sorrowful condition into a state of joy; hath (to use the Psalmist's expressions) *turned our mourning into dancing;* hath *put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness;* hath *considered our trouble, and known our soul in adversity;* hath *set our feet in a large room,*[m] and furnished us with plentiful means of subsistence; how in the various changes, and adventures, and travels of our life, upon sea and land, at home and abroad, among friends and strangers and enemies, he hath protected us from wants and dangers; from devouring diseases, and the distemperatures of infectious air; from the assaults of bloody thieves and barbarous pirates; from the rage of fire, and fury of tempests; from disastrous casualties; from treacherous surprises; from open mischiefs, that with a dreadful face approached and threatened our destruction; then most opportunely should we with all thankful exultation of mind admire and celebrate *our strength, and our deliverer;* our faithful *refuge in trouble,* and *the rock of our salvation.*

Also when the ordinary effects of divine providence do in any advantageous manner present themselves to our view; when we peruse the volumes of story, and therein observe the various events of human action, especially the seasonable rewards of virtue, the notable protections and deliverances of innocence, and the unexpected punishments of malicious wickedness: then we should with thankful acclamations celebrate the divine goodness and justice; joining in concert with that heavenly choir, and saying, *Hallelujah; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.*[n]

Or when we contemplate the wonderful works of nature, and, walking about at our leisure, gaze upon this ample theatre of the world, considering the stately beauty, constant order, and sumptuous furniture thereof; the glorious splendour and uniform motion of the heavens; the pleasant fertility of the earth; the curious figure and fragrant sweetness of plants; the exquisite frame of animals; and all other amazing miracles of nature, wherein the glorious attributes of God (especially his transcendent goodness,) are most conspicuously displayed; (so that by them not only large acknowledgments, but even gratulatory hymns, as it were of praise, have been extorted from the mouths of Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, and such like men, never suspected guilty of an excessive devotion;) then should our hearts be affected with thankful sense, and our lips break forth into his praise.

Yea, from every object of sense, from every event of providence, from every common occurrence, we may extract fit matter of thanksgiving: as did our Saviour, when, considering the stupid infidelity of those proud people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (who were not at all affected by his miraculous works, nor moved to repentance by his pathetical discourses), and comparing it with the pious credulity of his meaner disciples, he brake forth into that divine ejaculation: *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*[o] Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς Ἰησοῦς εἶπε, saith the evangelical narration; *Upon that occasion Jesus thus spake:* he embraced that convenient opportunity of thankfully acknowledging God's wise and gracious dispensation. And frequent occasion is afforded us daily (were our minds suitably disposed), of doing the like.

But so much concerning the time of performing this duty.

IV. We proceed to the matter thereof:

[m] Psal. xxx. 11; xxxi. 7, 8.

[n] Apoc. xix. 1, 2.

[o] Luke x. 21.

for all things. St. Chrysostom (in his Commentary upon the 145th Psalm), having enumerated several particulars for which we are bound to thank God; "Because" (I recite his words punctually rendered), "Because," saith he, "he hath made us, who before had no being, and made us such as we are; because he upholds us being made, and takes care of us continually, both publicly and privately, secretly and openly, with and without our knowledge; for all visible things created for our sake, the ministry of them afforded to us; the conformation of our bodies, the nobleness of our souls; his daily dispensations by miracles, by laws, by punishments; his various and incomprehensible providence; for the chief of all, that he hath not spared his only-begotten Son for our sake; the benefits conferred on us by baptism, and the other holy mysteries (or sacraments;) the ineffable good things to be bestowed on us hereafter, the kingdom of heaven, the resurrection, the enjoyment of perfect bliss;" having, I say, in these words comprised the things for which we are obliged to thank and praise God, he thus despondently concludes (Ἂν γὰρ ἕκαστόν τις τούτων καταλέγῃ, εἰς πέλαγος ἄφατον ἐμπεσεῖται εὐεργεσιῶν, καὶ ὄψεται πόσων ἐστὶν ὑπεύθυνος τῷ Θεῷ.) "If any one shall endeavour to recount particularly every one of these things, he will but plunge himself into an unexpressible deep of benefits, and then perceive for how unexpressibly and inconceivably many good things he stands engaged to God." And to the like *non plus* doth the devout Psalmist seem to be reduced, when he thus exclaims, *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.*[p]

I shall not therefore confound myself by launching too far into this immense ocean, nor strive minutely to compute the incomprehensible sum of the divine benefits; but only observe, that in gross, according to our Apostle's calculation, all things, which however happen to us, are ingredients thereof. No occurrence (great or small, common or particular, present or past, pleasant or sad, perpetual or transitory) is excluded from being the subject of our thanksgiving: each one may prove beneficial to us; and we are with a cheerful contentedness and a grateful resentment to receive them all from God's hand. But to observe some little distinction, I say—

1. We are to give thanks, not only for great and notable benefits, but for the least and most ordinary favours of God: though indeed none of God's favours are in themselves small and inconsiderable. Men are wont to bless themselves, if they receive but a transient glance from a prince's eye; a smile from a great personage; any slender intimation of regard from him that is in capacity to do them good. What is it, then, to receive the least testimony of his good-will, from whom alone every good thing can be expected; upon whose disposal all happy success of our wishes, our hopes, and our endeavours do entirely depend! We repute him unjust, who withholds the least part of what is due from the true owner: and is not he ingrateful, then, that omits to render thanks for the least of divine mercies?

There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars,[q] saith St. Paul. Some works of God indeed excel in lustre; yet all are glorious, all are to be discerned, all to be esteemed and thankfully entertained by us. The brightness of the one should not wholly obscure the other; if it do, it argues the weakness of our sense, the dulness of our spiritual faculty. For every beam of light that delights our eye, for every breath of air that cheers our spirits, for every drop of pleasant liquor that cools our thirst, for every minute of comfortable repose, for every step we safely take, for the happy issue of the least undertaking, for escaping the vengeance due to an idle word or a wanton thought, we owe a hymn of praise to God. But,

2. We are to render thanks, not only for new and present benefits, but for all we have formerly, all that we may hereafter, receive. We find David not only frequently acknowledging the gracious dispensations of providence toward him through the whole course of his life, but looking back in his thankful devotions as

[p] Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18; xxxvi. 5, 6, 7.

[q] 1 Cor. xv. 41.

far as his very original being, and praising God for favours conferred on him beyond his memory, Yea, before his life. *I will praise thee*, saith he, *for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them.*[r] And St. Paul, yet farther reflecting his grateful consideration, blesses God for his favour commenced before the beginning of things. *Blessed* (saith he) *be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world.*[s]

Neither doth the memory only of former, and the enjoyment of present, but the hope and foresight also of future blessings, worthily claim our thanks. For, saith St. Peter, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you.*[t] Beasts only, and men not much better than they, are affected with present good turns: but men of honest and generous temper resent indifferently the obligations of all times. Sense doth not confine their gratitude, nor absence remove, nor age wear it out. What once is done, is ever done to them; and what of courtesy is proposed, seems to them performed. But having before discoursed somewhat largely concerning the remembrance of benefits, I leave this point. Furthermore,

3. We should bless God, not only for new, rare, extraordinary accidents of providence, but for the common and daily benefits and indulgences thereof. These favours are usually the greatest and most valuable in their own nature. (For what can be imagined of higher consequence to us, than the preservation of our lives and of our estates, by which they are comfortably maintained; than the continuance of our bodies in good health, and our minds in their right wits; than the knowledge of heavenly truth, the encouragements to virtue and piety, the assistances of divine grace, and the promises of eternal bliss continually exhibited to us?)* Shall the commonness and continuance of these exceeding favours, that they are not given us once only, and transitorily, but continued, (that is, given us so often as time hath instants,) and with an uninterrupted perseverance renewed unto us; shall this abate and enervate our gratitude, which in all reason should mainly increase and confirm it? But this point I also touched before, and therefore, forbearing to insist thereon, I proceed,

4. We should give thanks, not only for private and particular, but for public benefits also, and for such as befall others. *I exhort therefore*, saith St. Paul, *before all things, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men;*[u] not *prayers* only, for good things to be bestowed on others; but *thanksgivings* also, for the benefits received by others. (And *ὑπὲρ πάντων* in our text, however otherwise commonly interpreted, may well admit this sense also; and be taken indifferently, *pro omnibus, for all persons*, and *propter omnia, for all things.*)

We are all citizens of the world, and concerned in its good constitution;[v] and thence obliged thankfully to adore the mighty Upholder and wise Governor thereof, praising him for all the general benefits liberally poured forth upon mankind. We partake in the commodities of civil society; and therefore should heartily thank him, by whose gracious disposal order is maintained, peace continued, justice administered, plenty provided, our lives made safe and sweet to us therein. We are members of a church, and highly interested in the prosperous estate and well-being thereof: when

[r] Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15, 16.
[s] Eph. i. 3, 4. [t] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

* Quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque vicissitudines, quem mensium temperatio, quemque ea quæ nobis gignuntur ad fruendum non gratum esse cogant; hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet?—*Cic. de Leg.* ii.

[u] 1 Tim. ii. 1. [v] *Vide* Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or. 2.

unity therefore is preserved, and charity abounds; when knowledge is increased, and virtue encouraged; when piety flourishes, and truth triumphs therein: we are bound to render all possible thanks to the gracious bestower of those inestimable blessings.

We are much mistaken in our account, if we either determine our own concernments, or measure this duty, by the narrow rule of our private advantage: for, subducting either the benefits commonly indulged to mankind, or those which accrue from the welfare of public society, what possibility will remain of subsistence, of safety, of content unto us? what but confusion, want, violence, and disquiet?

As we are concerned with our utmost endeavours to promote, to wish and pray for, to delight and rejoice in, the public good of mankind, the peace of our country, the prosperity of Sion; so we are to bless and thank him, by whose gracious help and furtherance they are attained.

If we consult all history (sacred and civil), we shall find it to contain hardly anything else considerable, but the earnest endeavours of good men for public benefit, and their thankful acknowledgments to the divine goodness for it. Moses, David, Nehemiah, St. Paul, all the prophets, and all the Apostles, what other things memorable did they do but serve God in procuring public good, and bless God for conferring it?

Neither only as we are combined with others in common interest, but without selfish respects, purely out of charity, and humanity, and ingenuous pity, are we obliged to thank God for the benefits he is pleased to impart to others. If upon these accounts we are commanded to *do good to all men;* to *rejoice with those that rejoice; to love even those that hate us*, and *bless those that curse us;*[x] 'tis (by fair consequence) surely intended, that we should also bless God for the good issue of our honest endeavours, or of our good wishes for them.

And verily could we become endowed with this excellent quality of delighting in other's good, and heartily thanking God for it, we needed not to envy the wealth and splendour of the greatest princes, not the wisdom of the profoundest doctors, not the religion of the devoutest anchorets, no, nor the happiness of the highest angels: for, upon this supposition, as the glory of all is God's, so the content in all would be ours. All the fruit they can perceive of their happy condition, of what kind soever, is to rejoice in it themselves, and to praise God for it: and this should we then do as well as they. My neighbour's good success is mine, if I equally triumph therein; his riches are mine, if I delight to see him enjoy them: his health is mine, if it refresh my spirits; his virtue mine, if I by it am bettered, and have hearty complacence therein. By this means a man derives a confluence of joy upon himself, and makes himself, as it were, the centre of all felicity; enriches himself with the plenty, and satiates himself with the pleasure, of the whole world: reserving to God the praise, he enjoys the satisfaction of all good that happens to any.

Thus we see David frequently thanking God, not for his favour only and mercy showed particularly to himself, but for his common munificence towards all; for (to use his own phrases) *his goodness to all, and his tender mercies over all his works;* for *executing judgement in behalf of the oppressed;* for *feeding the hungry;* for *loosening the prisoners;* for *opening the eyes of the blind;* for *raising them that are bowed down;* for *preserving the strangers*, and *relieving the fatherless and widow;* for *lifting up the meek;* for *loving, and caring for, and defending the righteous;* for *opening his hand, and satisfying the desire of every living thing;* for *giving to the beast his food, and to the young ravens when they cry unto him:*[y] in a word, for his goodness to every particular creature, not excluding the most contemptible nor the most savage of all. And how affectionately doth St. Paul everywhere thank God for the growth in grace and spiritual wisdom, for the patience in affliction and perseverance in faith, of those good Christians he writes unto! So should, with an unrestrained exuberance, both our charity to men, and our gratitude to God, abound. But moreover,

[x] Gal. vi. 10; Rom. xii. 15; Matt. v. 44.

[y] Psal. cxlv. 9; cxlvi. 7, 8, 9; cxlvii. 6; 1 Pet. v. 7; Psal. v. 11; civ. 28; cxlv. 16; cxlvii. 9.

5. We are obliged to give thanks, not only for pleasant and prosperous occurrences of providence, but for those also which are adverse to our desire, and distasteful unto our natural sense; for poverty, sickness, disgrace; for all the sorrows and troubles, the disasters and disappointments, that befall us. We are bound to pay thanks, not for our food only, but for our physic also (which, though ungrateful to our palate, is profitable for our health:) we are obliged, in the school of providence, not only for the good instructions, but for the seasonable corrections also vouchsafed unto us (whereby, though our senses are offended, our manners are bettered.*) Whatever proceeds from good purpose, and tends to a happy end, that is graciously designed, and effectually conduces to our good, is a fit subject of thanksgiving: and such may all adversities prove unto us! They proceed usually from love and kind intention toward us: for *Whom God loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*:[z] and, *I know, O Lord*, saith David, *that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*:[a] *in faithfulness*, that is, with a sincere intention of doing me good.

God thoroughly knows our constitution, what is noxious to our health, and what may remedy our distempers; and therefore accordingly disposeth to us

—pro jucundis aptissima quæque—;

instead of pleasant honey, he sometimes prescribes wholesome wormwood for us. We are ourselves greatly ignorant of what is conducible to our real good, and, were the choice of our condition wholly permitted to us, should make very foolish, very disadvantageous elections.

We should (be sure) all of us embrace a rich and plentiful estate; when as, God knows, that would make us slothful and luxurious, swell us with pride and haughty thoughts, encumber us with anxious cares, and expose us to dangerous temptations; would render us forgetful of ourselves, and neglectful of him. Therefore he wisely disposeth poverty unto us; poverty, the mother of sobriety, the nurse of industry, the mistress of wisdom; which will make us understand ourselves and our dependence on him, and force us to have recourse unto his help. And is there not reason we should be thankful for the means by which we are delivered from those desperate mischiefs, and obtain these excellent advantages?

We should all (certainly) choose the favour and applause of men: but this, God also knows, would corrupt our minds with vain conceit, would intoxicate our fancies with spurious pleasure, would tempt us to ascribe immoderately to ourselves, and sacrilegiously to deprive God of his due honour. Therefore he advisedly suffers us to incur the disgrace and displeasure, the hatred and contempt of men; that so we may place our glory only in the hopes of his favour, and may pursue more earnestly the purer delights of a good conscience. And doth not this part of divine providence highly merit our thanks?

We would all climb into high places, not considering the precipices on which they stand, nor the vertiginousness of our own brains: but God keeps us safe in the humble valleys, allotting to us employments which we are capable to manage.

We should perhaps insolently abuse power, were it committed to us; we should employ great parts on unwieldy projects, as many do, to the disturbance of others, and their own ruin: vast knowledge would cause us to overvalue ourselves, and contemn others; enjoying continual health, we should not perceive the benefit thereof, nor be mindful of him that gave it. A suitable mediocrity thereof of these things the divine goodness allotteth unto us that we may neither starve for want, nor surfeit with plenty.

In fine, the advantages arising from afflictions are so many, and so great, that (had I time, and were it seasonable to insist largely on this subject) it were easy to demonstrate, that we have great reason, not only to be contented with, but to rejoice in, and to be very thankful for, all the crosses and vexations we meet with: to receive them cheerfully at God's hand, as the medicines of our soul, and the condiments of our fortune; as the arguments of his good will, and the instru-

* Τὸν θεὸν ὁμοίως ὑμνητέον χρὴ, καὶ κολάζοντα, καὶ ἀνίεντα κολάσεως· ἀμφότερα γὰρ κηδεμονίας, ἀμφότερα ἀγαθότητος, &c.—Chrysost. in Psal. cxlviii.

[z] Heb. xii. 6. [a] Psal. cxix. 75.

ments of virtue: as solid grounds of hope, and comfortable presages of future joy unto us.

6. Lastly, we are obliged to thank God, not only for corporeal and temporal benefits, but also (and that principally) for spiritual and eternal blessings. We are apt, as to desire more vehemently, to rejoice more heartily in the fruition, and more passionately to bewail the loss of temporal good things; so more sincerely and seriously to express our gratitude for the reception of them, than for others relating to our spiritual good, to our everlasting welfare: wherein we misjudge and misbehave ourselves extremely. For, as much as the reasonable soul (that goodly image of divine essence, breathed from the mouth of God) doth in dignity of nature, and purity of substance, excel this feculent lump of organized clay, our body; as the blissful ravishments of spirit surpass the dull satisfactions of sense; as the bottomless depth of eternity exceeds that shallow surface of time, which terminates this transitory life: in such proportion should our appetite unto, our complacence in, our gratitude for, spiritual blessings, transcend the affections (respectively) engaged about these corporeal accommodations.

Consider that injunction of our Saviour to his disciples: *In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*[b] *Rejoice not;* that is, be not at all affected with this (although in itself very rare accomplishment, eminent privilege, glorious power of working that indeed greatest of miracles, subjecting devils; that is, baffling the shrewdest craft, and subduing the strongest force in nature) in comparison of that delight, which the consideration of the divine favour, in order to your eternal felicity, doth afford.

We are, 'tis true, greatly indebted to God for our creation, for that he hath extracted us from nothing, and placed us in so lofty a rank among his creatures; for the excellent faculties of soul and body wherewith he hath endued us; and for many most admirable prerogatives of our outward estate: but much more for our redemption, and the wonderful circumstances of unexpressible love and grace therein declared; for his descending to a conjunction with our nature, and elevating us to a participation of his; for dignifying us with more illustrious titles, and instating us in a sure capacity of a much superior happiness. Our daily food deserves well a grace to be said before and after it: but how much more that constant provision of heavenly manna, the evangelical verity; those savoury delicacies of devotion, whereby our souls are nourished to eternal life? 'Tis a laudable custom, when we are demanded concerning our health, to answer, *Well, I thank God;* but much more reason have we to say so, if our conscience can attest concerning that sound constitution of mind, whereby we are disposed vigorously to perform those virtuous functions, due from reasonable nature, and conformable to the divine law. If for the prosperous success of our worldly attempts; for avoiding dangers that threatened corporeal pain and damage to us; for defeating the adversaries of our secular quiet, we made *Te Deum laudamus* our ἐπινίκιον (our song for victory;) how much more for the happy progress of our spiritual affairs (affairs of incomparably highest consequence;) for escaping those dreadful hazards of utter ruin, of endless torture; for vanquishing sin and hell, those irreconcilable enemies to our everlasting peace; are we obliged to utter triumphal *anthems* of joy and thankfulness!

This is the order observed by the Psalmist: inciting his *soul* to *bless God* for *all his benefits*,[c] he begins with the consideration of God's mercy in pardoning his sins; then proceeds to his goodness in bestowing temporal favours. *Who forgiveth all thy sins*, leads the van; *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things*, brings up the rear in the enumeration and acknowledgment of God's benefits. That our minds are illustrated with the knowledge of God and his glorious attributes, of Christ and his blessed Gospel, of that straight path which conducteth to true happiness; that by divine assistance we are enabled to elude the allurements, to withstand the violences of temptation, to assuage immoderate desires, to bridle exorbitant passions, to correct vicious inclinations of mind; requires more our hearty thanks, than for

[b] Luke x. 20.

[c] Psal. ciii. 1, &c.

that we were able by our natural wit to penetrate the abstrusest mysteries, or to subjugate empires by our bodily strength. The forgiveness of our sins doth more oblige us to a grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodness, than should God enrich us with all the treasures contained in the bowels of the earth, or bottom of the ocean. One glimpse of his favourable countenance should more enflame our affections, than being invested with all the imaginable splendour of worldly glory.

Of these inestimable benefits, and all the advantageous circumstances wherewith they are attended, we ought to maintain in our hearts constant resentments; to excite our thankfulness, to kindle our love, to quicken our obedience, by the frequent contemplation of them.

Thus have I (though, I confess, much more slightly than so worthy a subject did require) prosecuted the several particulars observable in these words. I should conclude with certain inducements persuasive to the practice of this duty; whereof I have in the tenor both of the former and present discourse insinuated divers, and could propound many more: but (in compliance with the time) I shall content myself briefly to consider only these three very obvious ones.

I. First, therefore, we may consider, that there is no disposition whatever more deeply radicated in the original constitution of all souls endued with any kind of perception or passion, than being sensible of benefits received; being kindly affected with love and respect toward them that exhibit them; being ready with suitable expressions to acknowledge them, and to endeavour competent recompenses for them. The worst of men, the most devoid of all not only piety, but humanity and common ingenuity, the most barbarous and most wicked (whom neither sense of equity nor respect to law, no promise of reward or fear of vengeance, can anywise engage to do things just and fitting, or restrain from enormous actions,) retain notwithstanding something of this natural inclination, and are usually sensible of good turns done unto them. Experience teaches us thus much; and so doth that sure oracle of our Saviour: *If* (saith he) *ye do good to those who do good to you, what thank is it? for even sinners* (that is, men of apparently lewd and dissolute conversation) *do the same.*[d]

Yea, even beasts, and those not only the most gentle and sociable of them (the officious dog, the tractable horse, the docile elephant,) but the wildest also and fiercest of them (the untameable lion, the cruel tiger, and ravenous bear, as stories tell us, and experience attests,) bear some kindness, show some grateful affection to those that provide for them.[e]

Neither wild beasts only, but even inanimate creatures, seem not altogether insensible of benefits, and livelily represent unto us a natural abhorrence of ingratitude. The rivers openly discharge into the sea those waters, which by indiscernible conduits they derived thence; the heavens remit in bountiful showers what from the earth they had exhaled in vapour; and the earth, by a fruitful increase, repays the culture bestowed thereon; if not (as the Apostle to the Hebrews doth pronounce,) it deserves *cursing* and *reprobation.*[f] So monstrous a thing, and universally abominable to nature, is all ingratitude. And how execrable a prodigy is it, then, toward God, from whom alone we receive whatever we enjoy, whatever we can expect of good!

II. The second obligation to this duty is most just and equal. For (as he[g] said well,) *Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit: He unjustly requires* (much more unjustly receives) *a benefit, who is not minded to requite it.* In all reason we are indebted for what is freely given, as well as for what is lent unto us. For the freeness of the giver, his not exacting security, nor expressing conditions of return, doth not diminish, but rather increase the debt. He that gives, indeed, according to human (or political) law (which, in order to preservation of public peace, requires only a punctual performance of contracts,) transfers his right, and alienates his possession: but according to that more noble and perfect rule of ingenuity (the law which God and angels and good men chiefly observe, and govern themselves by,) what is given is but committed to the faith, deposited in the hand, treasured up in the custody of him that

[d] Luke vi. 33.
[e] *Vide* Gell. lib. v. c. 14.
[f] Heb. vi. 8.
[g] Laberius.

receives it: and what more palpable iniquity is there, than to betray the trust, or to detain the pledge, not of some inconsiderable trifle, but of inestimable goodwill?* *Excepta Macedonum gente* (saith Seneca,) *non est ulla data adversus ingratum actio*:[h] *In no nation (excepting the Macedonians) an action could be preferred against ingrateful persons, as so.* (Though Xenophon,[i] no mean author, reports, that among the Persians also there were judgments assigned, and punishments appointed, for ingratitude.) However, in the court of heaven, and at the tribunal of conscience, no offender is more constantly arraigned, none more surely condemned, none more severely punished, than the ingrateful man.

Since, therefore, we have received all from the divine bounty; if God should in requital, exact, that we sacrifice our lives to the testimony of his truth; that we employ our utmost pains; expend our whole estate, adventure our health, and prostitute all our earthly contents to his service; since he did but revoke his own, it were great injustice to refuse compliance with his demands: how much more, when he only expects from us and requires some few acknowledgments of our obligation to him, some little portions of our substance, for the relief of them that need, some easy observances of his most reasonable commands!

III. Thirdly, This is a most sweet and delightful duty. *Praise the Lord,* saith the most experienced Psalmist, *for the Lord is good; sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant:* and otherwhere, *Praise the Lord, for it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.*[k] The performance of this duty, as it especially proceeds from good humour, and a cheerful disposition of mind; so it feeds and foments them; both root and fruit thereof are hugely sweet and sapid. Whence St. James; *If any man be afflicted, let him pray; is any merry, let him sing psalms.*[l] *Psalms,* the proper matter of which is praise and thanksgiving.

Other duties of devotion have something laborious in them, something disgustful to our sense. Prayer minds us of our wants and imperfections; confession induces a sad remembrance of our misdeeds and bad deserts: but thanksgiving includes nothing uneasy or unpleasant; nothing but the memory and sense of exceeding goodness.

All love is sweet; but that especially which arises, not from a bare apprehension only of the object's worth and dignity, but from a feeling of its singular beneficence and usefulness unto us. And what thought can enter into the heart of man more comfortable and delicious than this, that the great Master of all things, the most wise and mighty King of heaven and earth, hath entertained a gracious regard, hath expressed a real kindness towards us? that we are in capacity to honour, to please, to present an acceptable sacrifice to him, who can render us perfectly happy? that we are admitted to the practice of that wherein the supreme joy of paradise, and the perfection of angelical bliss, consists? For praise and thanksgiving are the most delectable business of heaven; and God grant they may be our greatest delight, our most frequent employment upon earth!

To these I might add such farther considerations: That this duty is of all most acceptable to God, and most profitable to us.[m] That gratitude for benefit procures more, disposing God to bestow, and qualifying us to receive them. That the serious performance of this duty efficaciously promotes and facilitates this practice of other duties; since the more we are sensible of our obligations to God, the more ready we shall be to please him, by obedience to his commandments. What St. Chrysostom[n] saith of prayer—"It is impossible that he, who with competent promptitude of mind doth constantly apply himself thereto, should ever sin"—is most especially true of this part of devotion, for how can we at the same time be sensible of God's goodness to us, and willingly offend him? That the memory of past benefits, and sense of present, confirms our faith, and nourishes our hope

* Καλὸν δὲ θησαύρισμα κειμένη χάρις.
[h] De Benef. lib. viii. cap. 6.
[i] Xen. Cyro. cap. 1.
[k] Psal. cxxxv. 3; cxlvii. 1; ix. 1.
[l] James v. 13.
[m] *Vide* Psal. lxix. 30, 31; l. 13, 14, 23.
[n] *Vide* Diviniss. Chrys. locum tom. v. p. 76.

of future. That the circumstances of the divine beneficence mightily strengthen the obligation to this duty; especially his absolute freeness in giving, and our total unworthiness to receive; our very ingratitude itself affording strong inducements to gratitude. That giving thanks hath *de facto* been always the principal part of all religion (whether instituted by divine command, or prompted by natural reason, or propagated by general tradition;) the Ethnic devotion consisting (as it were totally) in the praise of their gods, and acknowledgment of their benefits; the Jewish more than half eucharistical oblations, and in solemn commemorations of providential favours; and that of the ancient Christians, so far forth, that byestanders could hardly discern any other thing in their religious practice than that they sang hymns to Christ, and by mutual sacraments obliged themselves to abstain from all villany.[o] But I will rather wholly omit the prosecution of these pregnant arguments, than be further offensive to your patience.

Now the blessed Fountain of all goodness and mercy inspire our hearts with his heavenly grace, and thereby enable us rightly to apprehend, diligently to consider, faithfully to remember, worthily to esteem, to be heartily affected with, to render all due acknowledgment, praise, love, and thankful obedience for all his (infinitely great and innumerably many) favours, mercies, and benefits freely conferred upon us: and let us say with David, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen.[p]

[o] Plin. Epist.
[p] Psal. lxxii. 18, 19; cvi. 48.

SERMON X.

ON THE KING'S HAPPY RETURN.

1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.—*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority.*

Saint Paul in his preceding discourse having insinuated directions to his scholar and spiritual son, Timothy, concerning the discharge of his office, of instructing men in their duty according to the evangelical doctrine (the main design whereof he teacheth to consist, not (as some men conceited) in fond stories, or *vain speculations*, but in practice of substantial duties, holding a *sincere faith*, maintaining a *good conscience*, performing offices of *pure* and *hearty charity*;) in pursuance of such general duty, and as a principal instance thereof, he doth here *first of all exhort*, or, doth *exhort that, first of all*, all kinds of devotion should be offered to God, as for *all men* generally, so particularly for *kings* and *magistrates*.[a] From whence we may collect two particulars: 1. That the making of *prayers for kings* is a Christian duty of great importance. (St. Paul judging fit to *exhort* thereto πρῶτον πάντων, *before all other things*; or, to *exhort that before all things* it should be performed.)* 2. That it is incumbent on the pastors of the church (such as St. Timothy was) to take special care that this duty should be performed in the church; both publicly in the congregations, and privately in the retirements of each Christian: according to what the Apostle, after the proposing divers enforcements of this duty, subsumeth in the eighth verse: *I will therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.*

The first of these particulars, That it is a duty of great importance *to pray for kings*, I shall insist upon: it being indeed now very fit and seasonable to urge the practice of it, when it is perhaps commonly not much considered, or not well observed; and when there is most

* Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι.
[a] 1 Tim. i. 3, 6, 5, 19.

need of it, in regard to the effects and consequences which may proceed from the conscionable discharge of it.

My endeavour therefore shall be to press it by divers considerations, discovering our obligation thereto, and serving to induce us to its observance: some whereof shall be general, or common to all times; some particular, or suitable to the present circumstances of things.

I. The Apostle exhorteth Christians to *pray for kings* with all sorts of prayer: with δεήσεις, or *deprecations*, from averting evils from them; with προσευχαί, or *petitions*, for obtaining good things to them; with ἐντεύξεις, or *occasional intercessions*, for needful gifts and graces to be collated on them; as, after St. Austin,[b] interpreters, in expounding St. Paul's words, commonly distinguish, how accurately I shall not discuss: it sufficing, that assuredly the Apostle meaneth, under this variety of expression, to comprehend all kinds of prayer. And to this I say we are obliged upon divers accounts.

1. Common charity should dispose us to pray for kings. This Christian disposition inclineth to universal benevolence and beneficence, according to that apostolical precept, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men*:[c] it consequently will excite us to pray for all men; seeing this is a way of exerting goodwill, and exercising beneficence, which any man, at any time, if he hath the will and heart, may have opportunity and ability to pursue.

No man indeed can otherwise benefit all: few men otherwise can benefit many: some men otherwise can benefit none: but in this way any man is able to benefit all, or unconfinedly to oblige mankind, deriving on any somewhat of God's immense beneficence. By performing this good office, at the expense of a few good wishes addressed to the sovereign Goodness, the poorest may prove benefactors to the richest, the meanest to the highest, the weakest to the mightiest of men: so we may benefit even those who are most remote from us, most strangers and quite unknown to us. Our prayers can reach the utmost ends of the earth; and by them our charity may embrace all the world.

And from them surely kings must not be excluded. For if, because all men are our fellow-creatures, and brethren by the same heavenly Father; because all men are allied to us by cognation similitude of nature; because all men are the objects of God's particular favour and care: if, because all men are partakers of the common redemption, by the undertakings of him who is the common Mediator and Saviour of all men; and because all men, according to the gracious intent and desire of God, are designed for a consortship in the same blessed inheritance (which enforcements St. Paul[d] in the context doth intimate:) if, in fine, because all men do need prayers, and are capable of benefit from them, we should be charitably disposed to pray for them: then must we also pray for kings, who, even in their personal capacity, as men, do share in all those conditions. Thus may we conceive St. Paul here to argue: *For, all men* saith he, *for kings;* that is consequently *for kings*, or particularly *for kings;* to pray for whom, at least no less than for other men, universal charity should dispose us.

Indeed, even on this account we may say, especially *for kings;* the law of general charity with peculiar advantage being applicable to them: for that law commonly is expressed with reference to our neighbour; that is, to persons with whom we have to do, who come under our particular notice, who by any intercourse are approximated to us; and such are kings especially. For whereas the greatest part of men (by reason of their distance from us, from the obscurity of their condition, or for want of opportunity to converse with them) must needs slip beside us, so that we cannot employ any distinct thought or affection toward them: it is not so with kings, who by their eminent and illustrious station become very observable by us; with whom we have frequent transactions and mutual concerns; who, therefore, in the strictest acceptation, are our neighbours; whom we are charged to love as ourselves; to whom consequently we must

[b] Aug. Ep. 59, Beza, Grotius, &c.
[c] Gal. vi. 10.
[d] 1 Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6.

perform this most charitable office of praying for them.

2. To impress which consideration, we may reflect, that commonly we have only this way granted us of exercising our charity towards princes; they being situated aloft above the reach of private beneficence:* so that we cannot enrich them, or relieve them by our alms; we cannot help to exalt or prefer them to a better state; we can hardly come to impart good advice, seasonable consolation, or wholesome reproof to them; we cannot profit or please them by familiar conversation. For as in divers other respects they resemble the Divinity; so in this they are like it, that we may say to them, as the Psalmist to God. *Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee.*[e] Yet this case may be reserved, wherein the poorest soul may benefit the greatest prince, imparting the richest and choicest goods to him: he may be indebted for his safety, for the prosperity of his affairs, for God's mercy and favour toward him, to the prayers of his meanest vassal. And thus to oblige princes, methinks, we should be very desirous; we should be glad to use such an advantage, we should be ambitious of such an honour.

3. We are bound to pray for kings out of charity to the public; because their good is a general good, and the communities of men (both church and state) are greatly concerned in the blessings by prayer derived on them.

The safety of a prince is a great part of the common welfare; the commonwealth, as it were, living and breathing in him: his fall, like that of a tall cedar (to which he is compared), shaking the earth, and discomposing the state; putting things out of course, and drawing them into new channels;[f] translating the administration of affairs into untried hands, and an uncertain condition. Hence, *Let the king live* (which our translators render, *God save the king*), was an usual form of salutation, or prayer: and, *O king live for ever*,[g] was a customary address to princes, whereto the best men did conform, even in application to none of the best princes; as Nehemiah to king Artaxerxes, and Daniel to king Darius. Hence not only good king Divid is called *the light of Israel* (*Thou shalt not*, said Abishai, *any more go out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel;*) but even the wicked and perverse king Zedekiah[i] is by the prophet Jeremy himself (who had been so misused by him) styled *the breath of our nostrils.* (*The breath* saith he, *of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits.*[k]) Hence not only the fall of good king Josiah was so grievously lamented;[l] but a solemn mourning was due to that of Saul; and, *Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep for Saul*,[m] was a strain becoming the mouth of his great successor king David. Hence the primitive Christians, who could not be constrained to swear by the genius of Cæsar, did not yet, in compliance with the usual practice, scruple to swear by their *health* or *safety*:* that is, to express their wishing it, with appeal to God's testimony of their sincerity therein; as Joseph may be conceived to have sworn *by the life of Pharaoh.*[n] Hence well might the people tell king David, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us;*[o] seeing the public was so much interested in his safety, and had suffered more in the loss of him, than if a myriad of others had miscarried.

This honour likewise of a prince is the glory of his people; seeing it is founded on qualities or deeds tending to their advantage; seeing it can hardly be supposed that he should acquire honour without their aid and concurrence, or that he should retain it without their support and their satisfaction. And as the chief grace and beauty of a body is in the head,[p] and the fairest ornaments of the whole are

* Privatorum ista copia est, inter se esse munificos.—*Auson. ad Gratian.*

Absit, Auguste, et istud sancta divinitas omen avertat, ut tu a quoquam mortalium expectes vicem beneficii.—*Mamerc. ad Julian.*

* Sed et juramus, sicut non per genios Cæsarum, ita per salutem eorum, quæ est augustior omnibus geniis.—*Tert. Apol.* cap. xxxii.

[e] Psal. xvi. 2. [f] Isa. ii. 13.

[g] 1 Kings i. 25; 2 Kings xi. 12; 2 Chron. xxiii. 11; 1 Kings i. 31; Dan. ii. 4; iii. 9; v. 10; vi. 6; Neh. ii. 3; Dan. vi. 21.

[h] 2 Sam. xxi. 17.

[i] 2 Kings xxiv. 19; Jer. xxxii. 3.

[k] Lam. iv. 20.

[l] Zech. xii. 11; 2 Chron. xxxv. 24.

[m] 2 Sam. i. 12, 24. [n] Gen. xlii. 15, 16.

[o] 2 Sam. xviii. 3. [p] Prov. iv. 9.

placed there; so is any commonwealth most dignified and beautified by the reputation of its prince.

The wealth and power of a prince are the supports and securities of a state; he thereby being enabled to uphold and defend its safety, its order, its peace;[q] to protect his people from foreign injuries and invasions; to secure them from intestine broils and factions; to repress outrages and oppressions annoying them.

The prosperity of a prince is inseparable from the prosperity of his people; they ever partaking of his fortunes, and thriving or suffering with him. For as when the sun shineth brightly, there is a clear day, and fair weather over the world; so when a prince is not overclouded with adversity or disastrous occurrences, the public state must be serene, and a pleasant state of things will appear. Then is the ship in a good condition, when the pilot in open sea, with full sails and a brisk gale, cheerfully steereth on toward his designed port.

Especially the piety and goodness of a prince is of vast consequence, and yieldeth infinite benefit to his country. For, *Vita principis censura est;* the life of a prince is a calling of other men's lives to an account.[r] His example hath an unspeakable influence on the manners of his people, who are apt in all his garb and every fashion to imitate him.* His practice is more powerful than his commands, and often doth control them. His authority hath the great stroke in encouraging virtue, and checking vice, if it bendeth that way; the dispensation of honours and rewards with the infliction of ignominies and corrections, being in his hand, and passing from it according to his inclinations. His power is the shield of innocence, the fence of right, the shelter of weakness and simplicity against violences and frauds. His very look (a smile or a frown of his countenance) is sufficient to advance goodness, and suppress wickedness; according to that of Solomon, *A king sitting in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.*[s] His goodness pleasing God, procureth his favour, and therewith deduceth from heaven all kinds of blessings on his people. And if those politic aphorisms of the Wise Man be true, that *righteousness exalteth a nation and establisheth a throne;* that *when it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth;* and *the same by the blessing of the upright is exalted:*[t] then upon his inclinations to virtue the advancement and stability of public welfare do mainly depend. So, for instance, how did piety flourish in the times of David, who loved, favoured, and practised it! and what abundance of prosperity did attend it! What showers of blessings (what peace, what wealth, what credit and glory) did God then pour down upon Israel![u] How did the goodness of that prince transmit favours and mercies on his country till a long time after his decease! How often did God profess *for his servant David's sake* to preserve Judah from destruction; so that even in the days of Hezekiah, when the king of Assyria did invade that country, God by the mouth of Isaiah declared, *I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*[v]

We may indeed observe, that, according to the representation of things in holy scripture, there is a kind of moral connection, or a communication of merit and guilt, between prince and people; so that mutually each of them is rewarded for the virtues, each is punished for the vices of the other. As for the iniquities of a people, God withdraweth from their prince the free communications of his grace and of his favour, (suffering him to incur sin, or to fall into misfortune; which was the case of that incomparably good king Josiah,[w] and hath been the fate of divers excellent princes, whom

* Flexibiles in quamcunque partem ducimur a principe, atque, ut ita dicam, sequaces sumus. Huic enim chari, huic probati esse cupimus; quod frustra speraverint dissimiles. Eoque obsequii continuatione pervenimus, ut prope omnes homines unius moribus vivamus.—*Plin. Paneg.*

Vita principis censura est, eaque perpetua; ad hanc dirigimur, ad hanc convertimur; nec tam imperio nobis opus est quam exemplo.—*Ibid.*

[q] Psal. lxxii. 4.

[r] Ecclus. x. 2.

[s] Prov. xx. 8.

[t] Prov. xiv. 3, 4; xvi. 12; 2 Sam. vii. 16; Prov. xi. 10, 11.

[u] 2 Sam. vii. 9; (Psal. lxxii. 7.)

[v] (2 Sam. vii. 16; 1 Kings xi. 13; Jer. xxxiii. 21; Psal. lxxxix. 29; cxxxii. 10); Isa. xxxvii. 35; 1 Kings xi. 32, 34.

[w] 2 Kings xxiii. 25; Isa. iii. 1, &c.

God hath snatched away from people unworthy of them, or involved with such a people in common calamities; according to the rule propounded in the Law,[x] of God's dealing with the Israelites in the case of their disobedience; and according to that of Samuel, *If you shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king:*) so reciprocally, for the misdemeanours of princes, (or in them, and by them,) God doth chastise their people. For what confusions in Israel did the offences of Solomon create! What mischiefs did issue thereon from Jeroboam's wicked behaviour! How did the sins of Manasseh stick to his country, since that, even after that notable reformation wrought by Josiah, it is said, *Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations wherewith Manasseh had provoked him!* And how sorely, by a tedious three years' famine, did God avenge Saul's cruelty toward the Gibeonites![y]

Nor are only the sins of bad princes affixed to people conspiring with them in impiety; for even of King Hezekiah it is said, *But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.*[z] So the pride and ingratitude of an excellent prince were avenged on his subjects. And when good king David (God averting his grace from him) did fall into that arrogant transgression of counting his forces, that, as Joab prudently foretold, became *a cause of trespass to Israel;* and *God*, saith the text, *was displeased with this thing, therefore he smote Israel.*[a]

David indeed seemed to apprehend some iniquity in this proceeding, expostulating thus, *Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done?*[b] But God had no regard to his plea, nor returned any answer to it; for indeed God's wrath began with the people, and their king's sin was but a judgment executed on them; for *the anger*, it is said, *of the Lord was kindled against Israel* (by their sin surely, which is the only incentive of divine wrath), *and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah.*[c]

So indeed it is that princes are bad, that they incur great errors, or commit notable trespasses, is commonly imputable to the fault of subjects; and is a just judgment by divine Providence laid on them, as for other provocations, so especially for their want of devotion, and neglecting duly to pray for them. For if they constantly, with hearty sincerity and earnest fervency, would in their behalf sue to God, who *fashioneth all the hearts of men*, who especially holdeth *the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth them whithersoever he will;*[d] we reasonably might presume, that God by his grace would direct them into the right way, and incline their hearts to goodness; that he would accomplish his own words in the prophet, *I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness;*[e] that we might have occasion to pay thanksgivings like that of Ezra: *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who hath put such things as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.*[f]

We are apt to impute the ill management of things, and the bad success waiting on it, unto princes, being in appearance the immediate agents and instruments of it; but we commonly do therein mistake, not considering that ourselves are most guilty and blameable for it; that it is an impious people which maketh an unhappy prince; that their offences do pervert his counsels, and blast his undertakings: that their profaneness and indevotion do incense God's displeasure, and cause him to desert princes, withdrawing his gracious conduct from them, and permitting them to be misled by temptation, by ill advice, by their own infirmities, lusts, and passions, into courses fit to punish a naughty people. So these were the causes of Moses's *speak-*

[x] Deut. xxviii. 36.
[y] 1 Sam. xii. 25; Prov. xxviii. 2; 1 Kings xi. 33; xv. 30; 2 Kings xvii. 21; xxiii. 26; 2 Sam. xxi. 1.
[z] (Jer. xxxii. 32;) 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.
[a] 1 Chron. xxi. 3, 7. [b] 1 Chron. xxi. 17.
[c] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.
[d] Psal. xxxiii. 15; Prov. xxi. 1.
[e] Isa. lx. 17. [f] Ezra vii. 27.

ing unadvisedly with his lips, and that *it went ill with him for their sakes*;[g] of Aaron's forming the molten calf; of David's numbering the people; of Josiah's unadvised enterprise against Pharaoh Neco; of Zedekiah's rebellion against the Assyrians (notwithstanding the strong discussions of the prophet Jeremy:) concerning which it is said, *For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.*[h]

Considering which things, it is apparent that prayer for our prince is a great office of charity to the public; and that in praying for his safety, for his honour, for his wealth, for his prosperity, for his virtue, we do in effect pray for the same benefits respectively to our country; that in praying for his welfare, we do in consequence pray for the good of all our neighbours, our friends, our relations, our families; whose good is wrapped in his welfare, doth flow from it, doth hang upon it.

We are bound, and it is a very noble piece of charity, to love our country, sincerely to desire and earnestly to further its happiness, and therefore to pray for it; according to the advice and practice of the Psalmist: *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*[i] We are obliged more especially upon the highest accounts, with dearest affection to love the church (our heavenly commonwealth, the society of our spiritual brethren), most ardently to tender its good, and seek its advantages; and therefore most urgently to sue for God's favour toward it: being ready to say after David, *Do good O God, in thy good pleasure to Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Arise, O Lord, and have mercy upon Sion: for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come.*[k] Now these duties we cannot more easily, more compendiously, or more effectually discharge, than by earnestly praying for our prince; seeing that if we do by our prayers procure God's favour to him, we do certainly draw it on the state and the church. If God, moved by our devout importunities, shall please to guard his person from dangers, and to *grant him a long life*;[l] to endue his heart with grace, with the love and fear of himself, with a zeal of furthering public good, of favouring piety, of discountenancing sin: if God shall vouchsafe to inspire him with wisdom, and to guide his counsels, to bless his proceedings, and to crown his undertakings with good success: then assuredly we have much promoted the public interest; then infallibly, together with these, all other blessings shall descend on us, all good will flourish in our land. This was the ancient practice of Christians, and directed to this end. For, *We* (saith Lactantius to Constantine) *with daily prayers do supplicate God, that he would first of all keep thee, whom he hath willed to be the keeper of things; then, that he would inspire unto thee a will, whereby thou mayest ever persevere in the love of God's name; which is salutary to all, both to thee for thy happiness, and to us for our quiet.**

4. Wherefore consequently our own interest and charity to ourselves should dispose us to pray for our prince. We being nearly concerned in his welfare, as parts of the public, and as enjoying many private advantages thereby; we cannot but partake of his good, we cannot but suffer with him. We cannot live quietly, if our prince is disturbed; we cannot live happily, if he be unfortunate; we can hardly live virtuously, if divine grace do not incline him to favour us therein, or at least restrain him from hindering us.† This is St. Paul's own consideration: *I exhort you* (saith he) *to make prayers for kings—that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all goodliness and honesty.*[m] Upon such an account God did command the Jews to pray for the welfare of that heathen state, under which they lived in captivity: *And seek*

[g] Psal. cvi. 32, 33; Exod. xxxii.; Deut. ix.
[h] 2 Kings xxiv. 20.
[i] Psal. cxxii. 6; (cxxviii. 5;) cxxii. 7.
[k] Psal li. 18; cii. 13, 16; (Isa. lxi. 1.)

* Cui nos quotidianis precibus supplicamus, ut te imprimis, quem rerum custodem voluit esse, custodiat; deinde inspiret tibi voluntatem, qua semper in amore divini nominis perseveres; quod est omnibus salutare et tibi ad felicitatem, et nobis ad quietem.—*Lact.* vii. 26.

† Nescio an plus moribus conferat princeps, qui bonos esse patitur, quam qui cogit.—*Plin. Panegyr.*

[l] Psal. xxi. 4. [m] 1 Tim. ii. 2.

(said he) *the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.*[n] And for the like cause, the Christians of old deemed themselves bound to pray for the Gentile magistrates, according to that of Tertullian: *We pray for you, because with you the empire is shaken: and the other members of it being shaken, assuredly even we, how far soever we may be thought from troubles, are found in some place of the fall.** Farther,

5. Let us consider, that subjects are obliged in gratitude and ingenuity, yea, in equity and justice, to pray for their princes. For,

They are most nearly related to us, and allied by the most sacred bands; being constituted by God, in his own room, the parents and guardians of their country; being also avowed and accepted for such by solemn vows, and most holy sacraments of allegiance: whence unto them, as such, we owe an humble piety, a very respectful affection, a most dutiful observance;† the which we cannot better express or exercise, than in our heartiest prayers for their welfare.

They by God are destined to be the protectors of the church, the patrons of religion, the fosterers and cherishers of truth, of virtue, of piety: for of the church in the evangelical times it was prophesied, *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers; thou shalt suck the breasts of kings; kings shall minister to thee:*[o] wherefore to them, not only as men and citizens, but peculiarly as Christians, we owe the highest duty; and consequently we must pay the best devotion for them.

To them we stand indebted for the greatest benefits of common life: they necessarily do take much care, they undergo great trouble, they are exposed to many hazards for our advantages; that *under their shadow*[p] we may enjoy safety and quiet, we may reap the fruits of our industry, we may possess the comforts and conveniences of our life, with security from rapine, from contention, from solicitude, from the continual fears of wrong and outrage.

To their industry and vigilancy, under God, we owe the fair administration of justice, the protection of right and innocence, the preservation of order and peace, the encouragement of goodness, and correction of wickedness; for they, as the Apostle telleth us, *are God's ministers, attending continually on these very things.*[q] They indeed so attend as to deny themselves, and so forego much of their own ease, their pleasure, their satisfaction; being frequently perplexed with cares, continually enslaved to business, and subject to various inconveniences, rendering their life to considerate spectators very little desirable.

As, therefore, according to our Lord's observation, they are usually styled *benefactors*,[r] so they really are; even the worst of them (such as Claudius or Nero, of whom our apostles speak) in considerable measure; at least in comparison of anarchy, and considering the mischiefs issuing from want of government. *Οὐ κολακεία ἐστι τὸ πρᾶγμα· The matter is not flattery* (saith St. Chrysostom,* himself of all men farthest from a flatterer;) *but according to the reason of the case* we must esteem ourselves much obliged to them for the pains they sustain in our behalf, and for the benefits we receive from them. For he indeed must be a very bad governor, to whom that speech of the orator Tertullus may not without glozing be accommodated: *Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.*[s]

However, what Seneca saith of philosophers, that *they of all men are most*

* Vobiscum enim concutitur imperium; concussis etiam cæteris membris ejus, utique et nos, licet extraneo a turbis æstimemur, in aliquo hoc casu inveniumur.—*Tert. Apol.* cap. xxxii.

† Quemcumque (Christianus) a Deo suo constitutum, necesse est, ut et ipsum diligat, et reveretur, et honoret, et salvum velit.—*Tert. ad Scap.* ii.

Jurat per Deum, et per Christum, et per Spiritum S. et per majestatem imperatoris, quæ secundum Deum generi humano diligenda est, et colenda.—*Veget.* ii. 5.

[n] Jer. xxix. 7.
[o] Isa. xlix 23; lx 16, 10

* Οὐ κολακεία ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν τοῦ δικαίου γίνεται λόγον.—Chrys. in 1 Tim. ii. 1.
[p] Lam. iv. 20.
[q] Rom. xiii. 6.
[r] Luke xxii. 25.
[s] Acts xxiv. 2, 3.

obliged, and most grateful to kings and magistrates, because from their care they enjoy the leisure, quiet, and security of contemplating and practising the best things; upon which account (saith he) *they could not but reverence the authors of so great a good as parents;** that is, or should be, far more true of Christians. *That leisure* (to use his own words) *which is spent with God*, and *which rendereth us like to God;*† the liberty of studying divine truth and of serving God, with security and quiet; are inestimable benefits, for the which they are indebted to the protection of magistrates: therefore in all reason a grateful retribution of good will, and of all good offices, particularly of our prayers, is to be paid to them. *Is it not very absurd*, saith St. Chrysostom, *that they should labour and venture for us, and we not pray for them?*‡

6. Whereas we are by divine command frequently enjoined to fear and reverence, to honour, to obey kings; we should look on prayer for them as a principal branch, and the neglect thereof as a notable breach of those duties. For,

As to honour and reverence, it is plain that no exterior signification, in ceremonious unveiling or cringing to them, can so demonstrate it, as doth the wishing them well in our hearts, and from thence framing particular addresses to the divine Majesty for their welfare. Than which practice there can be no surer argument, that we hold them in great account and consideration. And how indeed can we much honour them, for whom we do not vouchsafe so much as to offer our good wishes, or to mention them in our intercessions unto him, who requireth us to make them for all men, and particularly for those for whom we are concerned? Doth not this omission evidently place them in the lowest rank, beneath the meanest of our friends and relations? doth it not imply a very slender regard had to them?

And as for obedience, prayer for princes is clearly an instance thereof; seeing it may be supposed, that all princes do require it from their subjects. Not only Christian princes, who believe God the sole dispenser of all good things, and the great efficacy of devotion in procuring them from him, may be deemed to exact this beneficial office from us; but even heathens and infidels, from their dim notion of a sovereign Providence (which hath ever been common in the world), have made an account of this practice; as we may see by that decree of the Persian king in Ezra, charging his officers to furnish the Jewish elders with sacrifices, *that* (said he) *they may offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.*[t] And that such was the practice of the Romans even in their heathenish state, doth appear from those words of Pliny: *we have* (saith he) *been wont to make vows for the eternity of the empire, and for the welfare of the citizens; yea, for the welfare of the princes, and in their behalf for the eternity of the empire.**

Not only pious princes with a serious desire will expect this duty from us, but even profane ones in policy will demand it, as a decent testimony of respect to them, and a proper means of upholding their state; that they may seem to have place in the most serious regards and solemn performances of their subjects. So that to neglect this duty is ever a violation of our due obedience, and a kind of disloyalty to them. Again,

7. The praying for princes is a service peculiarly honourable, and very acceptable to God; which he will interpret as a great respect done to himself: for that thereby we honour his image and character in them, yielding in his presence this special respect to them as his representatives;† for that thereby we avow his government of the world by them as his

* Nulli adversus magistratus ac reges gratiores sunt; nec immerito, nullis enim plus præstant, quam quibus frui tranquillo otio licet. Itaque hi quibus ad propositum bene vivendi confert securitas publica, necesse est auctorem hujus boni ut parentem colant.—*Sen. Ep.* 73.

† Quanti æstimamus hoc otium, quod inter Deos agitur, quod Deos facit?—*Ibid.*

‡ Πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἄτοπον αὐτοὺς, &c.—Chrys. ubi supra. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17; Rom. xiii. 1; Tit. iii. 1; Prov. xxiv. 21.

* Nuncupare vota et pro æternitate imperii, et pro salute civium, imo pro salute principum, ac propter illos pro æternitate imperii, solebamus.—*Plin. Paneg.*

† Deo vel privatus, vel militans servit, cum fideliter eum diligit, qui Deo regnat autore.—*Veget.* ii. 5.

[t] Ezra vi. 10.

ministers and deputies; for that thereby we acknowledge all power derived from him, and depending on his pleasure; we ascribe to him an authority paramount above all earthly potentates; we imply our persuasion, that he alone is absolute sovereign of the world, *the King of kings, and Lord of lords*,[u] so that princes are nothing otherwise than in subordination to him, can do nothing without his succour, do owe to him all their power, their safety, their prosperity, and welfare;* for that, in fine, thereby disclaiming all other confidences *in any son of man*,[v] we signify our entire submission to God's will, and sole confidence in his providence. This service therefore is a very grateful kind of adoring our almighty Lord; and as such St. Paul recommendeth it in the words immediately subjoined to our text: *For this* (saith he) *is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*[w]

8. Let us consider, that whereas wisdom, guiding our piety and charity, will especially incline us to place our devotion there where it will be most needful and useful; we therefore chiefly must pray for kings, because they most need our prayers.

The office is most high, and hard to discharge well or happily; wherefore they need extraordinary supplies of gifts and graces from the divine bounty.

Their affairs are of greatest weight and importance, requiring answerable skill and strength to steer and wield them: wherefore they need from the fountain of wisdom and power special communications of light, of courage, of ability, to conduct, to support, to fortify them in their managements; they need that God should *uphold them πνεύματι ἡγεμονικῷ* with *that princely spirit*, for which king David prayed.[x]

They often are to deliberate about matters of dark and uncertain consequence; they are to judge in cases of dubious and intricate nature; the which to resolve prudently, or to determine uprightly, no human wisdom sufficiently can enable: wherefore they need *the spirit of counsel*, and *the spirit of judgment*, from the sole dispenser of them, the great *Counsellor* and most *righteous Judge*. The wisest and ablest of them hath reason to pray with Solomon, *Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?* That so what the Wise Man saith may be verified, *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king, his mouth transgresseth not in judgment:* and that of the wise woman, *As an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad.*[y]

They commonly are engaged in enterprises of greatest difficulty, insuperable by the might or industry of man; in regard to which we may say with Hannah, *By strength shall no man prevail;* with the Preacher, *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;* with the Psalmist, *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host:* wherefore they need aid and succour from the Almighty, to carry them through, and bless their designs with success.[z]

They are most exposed to dangers and disasters (standing like high towers most obnoxious to the winds and tempests of fortune;) having usually many envious ill-willers, many disaffected malecontents, many both open enemies and close insidiators; from whose force or treachery no human providence can sufficiently guard them: they do therefore need the protection of the ever-vigilant *Keeper of Israel* to secure them: for, *Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh but in vain;* except the Lord preserve the king, his guards, his armies surround him to no purpose.[a]

They have the natural infirmities of other men, and far beyond other men are subject to external temptations. The malicious spirit (as in the case of Job, of David, of Ahab, of Joshua the high priest, is expressed) is ever waiting for occasion, ever craving permission of God to seduce and pervert them;[b] suc-

* Temperans majestatem Cæsaris infra Deum, magis illum commendo Deo.—*Tert. Apol.* cap. xxxiii.

[u] 1 Tim. vi. 15.
[v] Psal. cxlvi. 3; cxviii. 8, 9.
[w] 1 Tim. ii. 3.
[x] Psal. li. 12.
[y] Isa. xi. 2; xxviii. 6; ix. 6; Psal. vii. 11; 1 Kings iii. 9; Wisd. ix. 4; (Psal. lxxii. 1; Prov. xvi. 10;) 2 Sam. xiv. 17.
[z] 1 Sam. ii. 9; Eccles. ix. 11; Psal. xxxiii. 16.
[a] Psal. xxi. 4; xci. 1; cxxvii. 1; xxxiii. 16.
[b] Zech. iii. 1.

cess therein being extremely conducible to his villainous designs. The world continually doth assault them with all its advantages, with all its baits of pleasure, with all its enticements to pride and vanity, to oppression and injustice, to sloth, to luxury, to exorbitant self-will and self-conceit, to every sort of vicious practice. Their eminency of state,[c] their affluence of wealth, their uncontrollable power, their exemption from common restraints, their continual distractions and encumbrances by varieties of care and business, their multitude of obsequious followers, and scarcity of faithful friends to advise or reprove them, their having no obstacles before them to check their wills, to cross their humors, to curb their lusts and passions, are so many dangerous snares unto them: wherefore they do need plentiful measures of grace, and mighty assistances from God, to preserve them from the worst errors and sins; into which otherwise it is almost a miracle if they are not plunged.

And seeing they are so liable to sin, they must consequently stand often in need of God's mercy to bear with them, and to pardon them.*

They therefore, upon so many accounts needing special help and grace from Heaven, do most need prayers to derive it thence for them.

All princes indeed do need them. Good princes need many prayer's for God's help, to uphold and confirm them in their virtue: bad princes need deprecations of God's wrath and judgment toward them, for offending his Majesty; together with supplications for God's grace to convert and reform them: the most desperate and incorrigible need prayers, that God would overrule and restrain them from doing mischief to themselves and others. All princes having many avocations and temptations, hindering them to pray enough for themselves, do need supplemental aids from the devotions of others.

Wherefore if we love them, if we love our country, if we love ourselves, if we tender the interests of truth, of piety, of common good, we, considering their case, and manifold need of prayers, will not fail earnestly to sue for them; that God would afford needful assistance to them in the administration of their high office, in the improvement of their great talents, in the conduct and management of their arduous affairs; that he graciously would direct them in their perplexed counsels, would back them in their difficult undertakings, would protect their persons from dangers, would keep their hearts from the prevalency of temptations, would pardon their failings and trespasses. Again,

9. Whereas God hath declared, that he hath special regard to princes, and a more than ordinary care over them, because they have a peculiar relation to him as his representatives, the *ministers of his kingdom*,[d] the main instruments of his providence, whereby he conveyeth his favours, and dispenseth his justice to men; because also the good of mankind, which he especially tendereth, is mainly concerned in their welfare: whereas, I say, *it is he that giveth salvation unto kings;* that *giveth great deliverance to his king, and showeth mercy to his anointed;* that hath *the king's heart and his breath*, and *all his ways in his hand*:[e] even upon this account our prayers for them are the more required. For it is a method of God, and an established rule of divine providence, not to dispense special blessings without particular conditions, and the concurrence of our duty in observance of what he prescribeth in respect to them. Seeing, then, he hath enjoined, that in order to our obtaining those great benefits which issue from his special care over princes, we should pray for it, and seek it from his hands; the omission of this duty will intercept it, or bereave us of its advantages; nor in that case may we expect any blessings of that kind. As without praying for ourselves we must not expect private favours from Heaven; so without praying for our prince, we cannot well hope for public blessings. For, as a profane person (who in effect disavoweth God, by not regarding to seek his favour and aid) is not qualified to receive any good from him; so a profane nation (which disclaimeth God's government of the world, by not

* Ὁ πλεῖστα πράττων, πλεῖστ' ἁμαρτάνει βροτῶν.

[c] Eccles. viii. 4.

[d] Wisd. vi. 4.

[e] Psal. cxliv. 10; xxi. 1; xviii. 50; (lxiii. 11;) 2 Sam. xxii. 51; Prov. xxi. 1; Dan. v. 23.

invoking his benediction on those who moderate it under him) is not well capable of common benefits. It is upon all these accounts true which Ezra said, *The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him: but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.*[f] If therefore we desire that our prince should not lose God's special regard, if we would not forfeit the benefits thereof to ourselves, we must conspire in hearty prayers for him.

10. To engage and encourage us in which practice, we may farther consider, that such prayers, offered duly (with frequency and constancy, with sincerity and zeal,) do always turn to good account, and never want good effect: the which, if it be not always easily discernible, yet it is certainly real; if it be not perfect as we may desire, yet it is competent as expediency requireth, or as the condition of things will bear.

There may be impediments to a full success of the best prayers; they may not ever prevail to render princes completely good, or extremely prosperous: for some concurrence of their own will is requisite to produce their virtue, God rarely working with irresistible power, or fatal efficacy; and the state of things, or capacities of persons, are not always fitly suited for prosperity. Yet are not such prayers ever wholly vain or fruitless; for God never prescribeth means unavailable to the end: he never would have commanded us particularly to pray for kings, if he did not mean to bestow a good issue to that practice.

And, surely, he that hath promised to hear all requests, with faith and sincerity and incessant earnestness presented to him, cannot fail to hear those which are of such consequence, which are so agreeable to his will, which do include so much honesty and charity. In this case, surely, we may have some confidence, according to that of St. John, *This is the confidence we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*[g]

As the good bishop, observing St. Austin's mother, with what constancy and passionateness she did pray for her son, being then engaged in ways of error and vanity, did encourage her, saying, *It is impossible that a son of these devotions should perish;** so may we hopefully presume, and encourage ourselves, that a prince will not miscarry, for whose welfare many good people do earnestly solicit: *Fieri non potest, ut princeps istarum lacrymarum pereat.*

You know, in general, the mighty efficacy of prayer; what pregnant assurances there are, and how wonderful instances thereof occur in holy Scripture, both in relation to public and private blessings:[h] how it is often promised, that *all things whatsoever we shall ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive;* and, that *whoever asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened:*[i] how the prayer of Abraham did heal Abimelech and his family of barrenness; how the prayers of Moses did quench the fire, and cure the bitings of the fiery serpents; how the prayer of Joshua did arrest the sun; how the prayer of Hannah did procure Samuel to her, as his name doth import; how Elias's prayers did open and shut the heavens; how the same holy Prophet's prayer did reduce a departed soul, and that of Elisha did effect the same, and that of another Prophet did restore Jeroboam's withered hand; how the prayers of God's people frequently did *raise them up saviours*, and *when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivered them out of their distresses:*[j] how the prayers of Asa discomfited a million of Arabians, and those of Jehoshaphat destroyed a numerous army of his enemies by their own hands, and those of Hezekiah brought down an angel from heaven to cut off the Assyrians, and those of Manasses restored him to his kingdom, and those of Esther saved her people from the brink of ruin, and those of Nehemiah inclined a Pagan king's heart to favour his pious design for re-edifying Jerusalem, and those of Daniel obtained strange

[f] Ezra viii. 22; Liv. v. 51, Hor. Od. iii. 6.
[g] 1 John v. 14.

* Fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrymarum pereat.—*Aug. Conf.* iv. 12.

[h] James v. 16. [i] Matt. xxi. 22; vii. 8. [j] Gen. xx. 17; Num. xi. 2; xxi. 7; (Psal. cvi. 30, O. T.;) Josh. x. 12; 1 Sam. i. 10; Luke iv. 25; James v. 17, 18; 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22; 2 Kings iv. 33; 1 Kings xiii. 6; Deut. iv. 29; Neh. ix. 27; Psal. cvi. 44; cvii. 6, 13, 19, 28; Judg. iii. 15; iv. 3; vi. 7; x. 21.

visions and discoveries:[k] how Noah, Job, Daniel, Moses, and Samuel, are represented as powerful intercessors with God; and consequently it is intimated, that the great things achieved by them were chiefly done by the force of their prayers.[l]

And seeing prayers in so many cases are so effectual, and work such miracles; what may we hope from them in this, wherein God so expressly and particularly directeth us to use them? If our prayers can so much avail to our personal and private advantage, if they may be very helpful to our friends; how much shall the devotions of many good men, all levelled at one mark, and aiming at a public most considerable good, be prevalent with the divine goodness? However, if God be not moved by prayers to convert a prince from all sin, to make him do all the good he might, to bless him in all matters; yet he may thence be induced to restrain him from much evil, to keep him from being worse, or from doing worse than otherwise would be; he may dispose him to do many things well, or better than of himself he would do; he may preserve him from many disasters otherwise incident to him; which will be considerable effects of prayer.

11. I shall add but one general consideration more, which is this—that prayer is the only allowable way of redressing our case, if we do suffer by or for princes.

Are they bad, or do they misdemean themselves in their administration of government and justice? we may not by any violent or rough way attempt to reclaim them; for they are not accountable to us, or liable to our corrections. *Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who shall say to him, What doest thou?*[m] was the Preacher's doctrine.

Do they oppress us, or abuse us? do they treat us harshly, or cruelly persecute us? we must not kick against them, nor strive to right ourselves by resistance. For, *against a king* (saith the Wise Man) *there is no rising up;* and, *Who* (said David) *can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?* and, *They* (saith St. Paul) *that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.*[n]

We must not so much as ease our stomach, or discharge our passion, by railing or inveighing against them. For, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people*, is a divine law; and, to *blaspheme*, or revile, *dignities*, is by St. Peter and St. Jude reprehended as a notable crime.[o]

We must not be bold or free in taxing their actions. For, *is it fit*, saith Elihu, *to say to a king, Thou art wicked, and to princes, ye are ungodly?* and, to *reproach the footsteps of God's anointed*, is implied to be an impious practice.[p]

We must forbear even complaining and murmuring against them. For murmurers are condemned as no mean sort of offenders; and the Jews in the wilderness were sorely punished for such behaviour.[q]

We must not (according to the Preacher's advice) so much as *curse them in our thoughts;* or not entertain ill conceits and ill wishes in our minds towards them.[r]

To do these things is not only high presumption in regard to them (inconsistent with the dutiful affection and respect which we owe to them), but it is flat impiety toward God, and an invasion of his authority; who alone is *King of kings*, and hath reserved to himself the prerogative of judging, of rebuking, of punishing kings, when he findeth cause.

These were the misdemeanors of those in the late times, who, instead of praying for their sovereign, did clamour and rail at him, did asperse him with foul imputations, did accuse his proceedings, did raise tumults, and levy war against him, pretending by rude force to reduce him to his duty; so usurping on their prince, or rather on God himself; assuming his right, and taking his work out of his hands, discovering also therein great profaneness of mind, and distrust of God's providence; as if God, being implored by prayer, could not, or would not, had it been needful, without such irregular courses, have redressed those evils in Church or State, which they pretended to feel or fear.

[k] 2 Chron. xiv. 11; xx. 3, 12, 23; xxxii. 20, 21; xxxiii. 12, 13; Esther iv. 16; Neh. ii. 11; . 4; Dan. chap. ii. iv. v. vii. viii. ix. x. xi. xii.
[l] Ezek. xiv. 14; Jer. xv. 1.
[m] Eccles. viii. 4.
[n] Prov. xxx. 31; 1 Sam. xxvi. 9; Rom. xiii. 2.
[o] Exod. xxii. 28; Acts xxiii. 5; 2 Pet. ii 10; Jude 8.
[p] Job xxxiv. 18; Psal. lxxxix. 51.
[q] Jude 16.
[r] Eccles. x. 20; (Isa. xiii. 21.)

Nothing, therefore, in such cases, is left to us for our remedy or ease, but having recourse to God himself, and seeking relief from his hand in his good time, by converting our prince, or directing him into a good course; however comforting ourselves in the conscience of submitting to God's will.*

This is the only method St. Paul did prescribe, even when Nero, a most vile, flagitious man, a sorry and naughty governor as could be, a monstrous tyrant, and most bloody persecutor (the very inventor of persecution), did sway the empire.† He did not advise Christians to stand upon their guard, to contrive plots, to provide arms, to raise mutinies and insurrections against him; but to offer supplications, prayers, and intercessions for him, as the best means of their security and comfort.‡ And this was the course of the primitive Christians, during their hard condition under the domination of Heathen princes, impugners of their religion; *prayers and tears were* then the only *arms of the Church;* whereby they long defended it from ruin, and at last advanced it to most glorious prosperity.§

Indeed, if, not assuming the liberty to find fault with princes, we would practise the duty of seeking God for his blessing on their proceedings; if, forbearing to scan and censure acts of state, we would earnestly implore God's direction of them; if, leaving to conceive disgusts, and vent complaints about the state of things, we would assiduously petition God for the settlement of them in good order; if, instead of being shrewd politicians, or smart judges in such matters, we would be devout orators and humble solicitors at the throne of grace; our endeavours surely would find much better effect towards public advantage: we certainly might do more good in our closets by a few hearty wishes uttered there, than by all our tattling or jangling politics in corners.

There are great contrivances to settle things: every one hath his model of state, or method of policy, to communicate for ordering the state; each is zealous for his own conceit, and apt to be displeased with those who dissent from him; but it is, as the fairest and justest, so the surest and likeliest way, of reducing things to a firm composure (without more ado, letting the world alone, to move on its own hinges, and not impertinently troubling ourselves or others with the conduct of it), simply to request of Almighty God, the sovereign Governor and sole Disposer of things, that he would lead his own vicegerents in the management of the charge by himself committed to them. *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God,*[s] is a rule very applicable to this case.

As God's providence is the only sure ground of our confidence or hope for the preservation of Church and State, or for the restitution of things into a stable quiet; so it is only our hearty prayers, joined with a conscientious observance of God's laws, whereby we can incline Providence to favour us. By them alone we may hope to save things from sinking into disorder; we may assuage the factions, we may defeat the machinations, against the public welfare.

12. Seeing, then, we have so many good arguments and motives inducing to pray for kings, it is no wonder that, to back them, we may also allege the practice of the Church, continually in all times performing this duty in its most sacred offices, especially in the celebration of the holy communion.[t]

St. Paul indeed, when he saith, *I exhort, first of all, that prayers be made,*[u] doth chiefly impose this duty on Timothy, or supposeth it incumbent on the pastors of the church, to take special care that

* Absit enim ut indigne feramus ea nos pati quæ optamus, aut ultionem a nobis aliquam machinemur, quam a Deo expectamus.—*Tert. ad Scap.* 2.

† Qui non dicam regum, sed omnium hominum, et vel bestiarum sordidissimus, dignus exstitit qui persecutionem in Christianos primus inciperet.—*Sulp. Sev.* ii. 40.

‡ Ita nos magis oramus pro salute imperatoris, ab eo eam postulantes qui præstare potest. Et utique ex disciplina patientiæ divinæ agere nos, satis manifestum esse vobis potest, cum tanta hominum multitudo, pars pene major civitatis cujusque, in silentio et modestia agimus.—*Tert. ad Scap.* 2.

§ Fundendo sanguinem, et patiendo magis quam faciendo contumelias, Christi fundata est ecclesia: persecutionibus crevit, &c.—*Hier. Ep.* 62.

[s] Phil. iv. 6.

[t] Const. Apost. viii. 13; ii. 57.

[u] 1 Tim. ii. 8; Polycarp ad Phil. c. 12.

prayers be made for this purpose, and offered up in the church jointly by all Christians: and accordingly the ancient Christians, as Tertullian doth assure us, did *always pray for the emperors, that God would grant them a long life, a secure reign, a safe family, valiant armies, a faithful senate, a loyal people, a quiet world, and whatever they, as men or as emperors, could wish.** Thus addeth he, even for their persecutors, and in the very pangs of their sufferings they did not fail to practice. Likewise of the Church in his time, St. Chrysostom telleth us, that *all communicants did know how every day, both at even and morning, they did make supplication for all the world, and for the emperor, and for all that are in authority.*†

And in the Greek liturgies (the composure whereof is fathered on St. Chrysostom) there are divers prayers interspersed for the emperors, couched in terms very pregnant and respectful.

If the officers of the Roman Church, and of the churches truckling under it, in latter times, shall seem more defective or sparing in this point of service, the reason may be, for that a superlative regard to the Solar or Pontifical authority (as Pope Innocent III. distinguished) did obscure their devotion for Lunar or Regal Majesty. But our Church hath been abundantly careful, that we should in most ample manner discharge this duty; having in each of her holy offices, directed us to pray for our King in expressions most full, hearty, and lively.

She hath indeed been charged as somewhat lavish or over-liberal of her devotions in this case. But it is a good fault, and we little need fear over-doing in observance of a precept so very reasonable, and so important; supposing that we have a due care to join our heart with the Church's words, and to the frequency of prayers for our Prince do confer a suitable fervency. If we be not dead, or merely formal, we can hardly be too copious in this kind of devotion; reiteration of words can do no harm, being accompanied with the renovation of our desires. Our text itself will bear us out in such a practice; the Apostle therein by variety of expression appearing solicitous, that abundance of prayers for kings should be offered in the Church, and no sort of them omitted.

These are so many general inducements to this duty at all times; and there are beside divers particular reasons enforcing it now, in the present state and posture of things.

Times of trouble, of danger, of fear, of darkness and perplexity, of distraction and distress, of guilt and deserved wrath, are most seasonable for recourse to the divine help and mercy in prayer.*[v]

And are not ours such? are they not much like to those of which the Psalmist saith, *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course?* or like those of which our Lord spake, when there was *upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth?*[w]

Are not the days gloomy, so that no human providence can see far, no wisdom can descry the issue of things?

Is it not a very unsettled world, wherein all the public frames are shaken almost off the hinges, and the minds of men extremely discomposed with various passions; with fear, suspicion, anger, discontent, and impatience? How from dissensions in opinion do violent factions and feuds rage; the hearts of men boiling with fierce animosities, and being exasperated against one another, beyond any hopes or visible means of reconcilement![x]

Are not the fences of discipline cast down? Is there any conscience made of

* Precantes sumus semper pro omnibus imperatoribus vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, quæcunque hominis et Cæsaris vota sunt.—*Tert. Apol.* cap. 30.

Hoc agite, boni præsules, extorquete animam Deo supplicantem pro imperatore.—*Ibid.*

† Καὶ τοῦτο ἴσασιν οἱ μύσται, πῶς καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν γίνεται καὶ ἐσπέρᾳ καὶ ἐν πρωΐᾳ· πῶς ὑπὲρ παντὸς τοῦ κοσμου καὶ βασιλέων, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ποιούμεθα τὴν δεησιν.—Chrys. in 1 Tim. ii. 1.

* Inops senatus auxilii humani ad deos populum ac vota vertit.—*Liv.* iii. 7; v. 16.

[v] Psal. cxlv. 18; xviii. 6; lxxvii. 2; lxxxvi. 7; cxviii. 5; cxlii. 1; cvii. 6; James v. 13; 2 Chron. vi. 36.

[w] Psal. lxxxii. 5; Luke xxi. 25, 26; (2 Kings xix. 3.)

[x] Psal. cvii. 27.

violating laws? Is not the dread of authority exceedingly abated, and all government overborne by unbridled licentiousness?

How many adversaries are there, *bearing ill will to our Sion!*[y] How many turbulent, malicious, crafty spirits, eagerly bent, and watching for occasion to subvert the Church, to disturb the State, to introduce confusion in all things! How many Edomites, who say of Jerusalem (both ecclesiastical and civil), *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground!*[z]

Have we not great reason to be fearful of God's just displeasure, and that heavy judgments will be poured on us for our manifold heinous provocations and crying sins; for the prodigious growth of atheism, infidelity, and profaneness; for the rife practice of all impieties, iniquities, and impurities, with most impudent boldness, or rather with outrageous insolence; for the extreme dissoluteness in manners; the gross neglect or contempt of all duties; the great stupidity and coldness of people generally as to all concerns of religion; for the want of religious awe toward God, of charity toward our neighbour, of respect to our superiors, of sobriety in our conversation; for our ingratitude for many great mercies, and incorrigibleness under many sore chastisements, our insensibleness of many plain warnings, loudly calling us to repentance?

Is not all the world about us in combustion, cruel wars raging everywhere, and Christendom weltering in blood? and although at present, by God's mercy, we are free, who knows but that soon, by God's justice, the neighbouring flames may catch our houses?

In fine, is not our case palpably such, that for any good composure or reinstatement of things in good order, for upholding truth and sound doctrine, for reducing charity and peace, for reviving the spirit of piety, and bringing virtue again into request; for preserving state and Church from ruin; we can have no confidence or reasonable hope, but in the good providence and merciful succour of Almighty God; *beside whom there is no saviour;* who alone is *the hope of Israel, and saviour thereof in time of trouble?*

[y] Psal. cxxix. 5; lxxxiii. 5.
[z] Psal. cxxxvii. 7.

we now having great cause to pray with our Lord's disciples in the storm, *Lord, save us, we perish.*[a]

Upon such considerations, and others whereof I suppose you are sufficiently apprehensive, we now especially are obliged earnestly to pray for our King, that God in mercy would preserve his royal person, and inspire his mind with light, and endue his heart with grace, and in all things bless him to us, to be *a repairer of our breaches, and a restorer of paths to dwell in;* so that *under him we may lead a quiet life in all godliness and honesty.*[b]

I have done with the first duty (*prayer for kings;*) upon which I have the rather so largely insisted, because it is very seasonable to our present condition.

II. The other (*thanksgiving*) I shall but touch, and need not perhaps do more. For,

1. As to general inducements, they are the same or very like to those which are for prayer; it being plain, that whatever we are concerned to pray for, when we want it, that we are bound to thank God for, when he vouchsafeth to bestow it. And if common charity should dispose us to resent the good of princes with complacence; if their welfare be a public benefit; if ourselves are interested in it, and partake great advantages thereby; if in equity and ingenuity we are bound to seek it; then, surely, we are much engaged to thank God, the bountiful donor of it, for his goodness in conferring it.

2. As for particular motives, suiting the present occasion, I need not by information or impression of them farther to stretch your patience; seeing you cannot be ignorant or insensible of the grand benefits by the divine goodness bestowed on our King, and on ourselves, which this day we are bound with all grateful acknowledgment to commemorate. Wherefore, instead of reciting trite stories, and urging obvious reasons (which a small recollection will suggest to you), I shall only request you to join with me in the practice of the duty, and in acclamation of praise to God. Even so,

Blessed be God, who hath given to us

[a] Isa. xliii. 11; Hos xiii. 4; Jer. xiv. 8; Matt. viii. 25.
[b] Isa. lviii. 12; 1 Tim. ii. 2.

so gracious and so benign a prince (the experiments of whose clemency and goodness no history can parallel), to sit on the throne of his blessed father, and renowned ancestors.[c]

Blessed be God, who hath protected him in so many encounters, hath saved him from so many dangers and snares, hath delivered him from so great troubles.[d]

Blessed be God, who in so wonderful a manner, by such miraculous trains of providence, did reduce him to his country, and reinstate him in the possession of his rights; thereby vindicating his own just providence, *declaring his salvation, and openly shewing his righteousness in the sight of all people.*[e]

Blessed be God, who in him and with him did restore to us our ancient good constitution of government, our laws and liberties, our peace and quiet; rescuing us from lawless usurpations and tyrannical yokes, from the insultings of error and iniquity, from horrible distractions and confusions.

Ever blessed be God, who hath *turned the captivity of Sion;* hath raised our Church from the dust, and re-established the sound doctrine, the decent order, the wholesome discipline thereof; hath restored true religion, with its supports, advantages, and encouragements.[f]

Blessed be the Lord, who hath granted us to continue these sixteen years in the peaceable fruition of those blessings.

Praised be God, who hath not cast out our prayer, nor turned his mercy from us.

Praised be God, *who hath turned our heaviness into joy, hath put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness.*

Let our mouth speak the praise of the Lord; and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

The Lord liveth, and blessed be our rock; and let the God of our salvation be exalted.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen.

[c] 1 Kings i. 48.
[d] Psal. xviii. 46; lxxxix. 22, 23.
[e] Psal. xcviii. 2.
[f] Psal. cxxvi. 1; (Isa. xxx. 20.)

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.[g]

SERMON XI.

ON THE GUNPOWDER-TREASON.*

PSAL. lxiv. 9, 10.—*And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

IF we should search about for a case parallel to that which we do now commemorate, we should, perhaps, hardly find one more patly such, than is that which is implied in this Psalm: and if we would know the duties incumbent on us in reference to such an occasion, we could scarce better learn them otherwhere than in our text.

With attention perusing the Psalm, we may therein observe, that its great Author was apprehensive of a desperate plot by a confederacy of wicked and spiteful enemies, with great craft and secresy, contrived against his safety. *They* (saith he) *encourage themselves in an evil matter: they communs of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?* That for preventing the blow threatened by this design (whereof he had some glimpse, or some presumption, grounded upon the knowledge of their implacable and active malice), he doth implore divine protection: *Hide me* (saith he) *from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.* That he did confide in God's mercy and justice for the seasonable defeating, for the fit avenging their machination: *God* (saith he) *shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.* That they should themselves become the detectors of their crime, and the instruments of the exemplary punishment due thereto: *They*

* On November 5, 1673.
[g] Psal. lxvi. 20; xxx. 11; cxlv. 21; xviii. 46; lxxii. 18, 19; cvi. 48; xli. 13; lxxxix. 52; lxviii. 34; 1 Chron. xvi. 8-36.

(addeth he) *shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.*[a]

Such was the case; the which unto what passage in the history it doth relate, or whether it belongeth to any we have recorded, it may not be easy to determine. Expositors commonly do refer it to the designs of Saul upon David's life. But this seeming purely conjecture, not founded upon any express words, or pregnant intimations in the text, I shall leave that inquiry in its own uncertainty. It sufficeth to make good its pertinency, that there was such a mischievous conspiracy, deeply projected, against David (a very great personage, in whose safety the public state of God's people was principally concerned; he being then king of Israel, at least in designation, and therefore in the precedent Psalm, endited in Saul's time, is so styled;) from the peril whereof he by the special providence of God was rescued, with the notable disappointment and grievous confusion of those who managed it.[b] The which case (at least in kind, if not in degree) beareth a plain resemblance to that which lieth before us.

And the duties, which upon that occasion are signified to concern people then, do no less now sort to us; the which, as they lie couched in our text, are these: 1. *Wisely* to *consider God's doing;* 2. To *fear;* 3. To *declare God's work;* 4. To *be glad in the Lord;* 5. To *trust in God;* 6. To *glory.* Of which the first three are represented as more generally concerning men; the others as appertaining more peculiarly to righteous and upright persons.

These duties it shall be my endeavour somewhat to explain and press, in a manner applicable to the present case. I call them duties; and to warrant the doing so, it is requisite to consider, that all these particulars may be understood in a double manner; either as declarative of event, or as directive of practice upon such emergencies.

When God doth so interpose his hand, as signally to check and confound mischievous enterprises, it will be apt to stir up in the minds of men an apprehension of God's special providence, to strike into their hearts a dread of his power and justice, to wring from their mouths suitable declarations and acknowledgments: and particularly then good men will be affected with pious joy; they will be encouraged to confide in God, they will be moved to glory, or to express a triumphant satisfaction in God's proceedings. These events naturally do result from such providential occurrences; for producing of these events, such occurrences are purposely designed; and accordingly (where men are not by profane opinions or affections much indisposed) they do commonly follow.

But yet they are not proposed simply as events, but also as matters of duty: for men are obliged readily to admit such impressions upon their minds, hearts, and lives, from the special works of Providence; they are bound not to cross those natural tendencies, not to frustrate those wise intents of God, aiming at the production of such good dispositions and good practices: whence if those effects do not arise, as often notoriously they do not in some persons, men thereby do incur much guilt and blame.

It is indeed ordinary to represent matter of duty in this way, expressing those practices consequent in effect, which in obligation should follow, according to God's purpose, and the nature of causes ordered by him. As when, for instance, God in the law had prescribed duty, and threatened sore punishment on the disobedient, it is subjoined, *And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously;*[c] the meaning is, that such exemplary punishment is in its nature apt, and in its design tendeth to produce such effects, although not ever, questionless, with due success, so as to prevent all transgression of those laws. So also, *When* (saith the Prophet) *thy judgments are in the land, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;*[d] the sense is, that divine judgments in themselves are instructive of duty; it is their drift to inform men therein, and men ought to learn that lesson from them: although in effect divers there be, whom no judgment can make wiser or better; such as those of whom in the same Prophet it is said, *The people turneth*

[a] Psal. lxiv. 5, 2, 7, 8.
[b] Psal. lxiii. 11.
[c] Deut. xvii. 13; xiii. 11; xix. 20.
[d] Isa. xxvi. 9.

not unto him that smiteth them; and in another, *In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction.*[e] As, therefore, frequently otherwhere, so also here, this kind of expression may be taken chiefly to import duty. To begin, then, with the first of these duties.

I. We are upon such occasions obliged *wisely to consider* (or as the Greek rendereth it, *συνιέναι, to understand,* or *to perceive*, as our old translation hath it) *God's doing.** This I put in the first place, as previous in nature, and influential upon the rest: whence (although in the Hebrew it be knit to the rest, as they all are to one another, by the conjunctive particle *ve*, *and*, yet) we do translate it casually, *For they shall wisely consider, for they shall perceive;* because, indeed, without duly considering and rightly understanding such occurrences to proceed from God, none of the other acts can or will be performed; attentive consideration is needful to beget knowledge and persuasion; these to breed affection and practice.

There are many who, in such cases, are nowise apprehensive of God's special providence, or affected with it; because they do not consider, or do not consider wisely and intelligently.

Some are very inobservant and careless in regard to things of this nature; so drowsy and heedless, as not to attend to whatever passeth, or to mind what God acteth in the world: such as those of whom the Prophet saith, *The harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands:*[f] that is, their minds are so amused by wanton divertisements, their hearts are so immersed in sensual enjoyments, as nowise to observe the most notable occurrences of Providence.

Others (although they do ken and regard what is done, as matter of news, or story, entertaining curiosity and talk; yet) out of sloth or stupidity do little consider it, or study whence it springeth; contenting themselves with none, or with any superficial account which fancy or appearance suggesteth: like beasts they do take in things obvious to their sense, and perhaps stand gazing on them; but do not make any careful reflection, or inquiry into their original causes and reasons; taking (as a dog, when he biteth the stone flung at him, or as a child that is angry with the log he falleth on) whatever appeareth next to be the principal cause: such as the Psalmist again toucheth, when he saith, *A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this:* and as he doth acknowledge himself on one occasion to have been: *So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.*[g]

Others pretend to consider much, and seem very inquisitive; yet (being misguided by vain prejudices or foul affections) do not consider wisely, or well understand these matters; the result of their care and study about them being to farther them on wrong causes, ascribing them to the mere conduct and agency of visible causes, hurried by a necessary swing, or rolling on by a casual fluctuation of things; not descrying God's hand in them, but profanely discarding and disclaiming it: such as those in the Psalms, who so reflected on Providence as to say, *How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? The Lord doth not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard it:*[h] such as has been the brood of Epicurean and profane considerers in all times, who have earnestly plodded, and strained their wits, to exclude God from any inspection or influence upon our affairs.

Some indeed there have been so very dull and stupid, or so perverse and profane, as not to discern God's hand, when it was *made bare*, *raised up*, and *stretched out* in the achievement of most prodigious works; not to read Providence when set forth in the largest and fairest print such as those of whom it is said in the Psalm, *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt;* and those of whom it is observed in the Gospel, *Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not:* such as the mutinous people, who although they beheld *the earth swallowing up Korah with his complices, and a fire from the Lord consuming the men that offered incense:* yet presently did fall a

* השכילו ומשכיל συνῆκον τὰ ποιήματα.

[e] Isa. ix. 13; Jer. ii. 30; v. 3; Neh. ix. 29.

[f] Isa. v. 12; Psal. xxviii. 5; x. 4.

[g] Psal. xcii. 6; lxxiii. 22.

[h] Psal. lxxiii. 11; xciv. 7; x. 11.

charging Moses and Aaron, saying, *Ye have killed the people of the Lord.*[1] No wonder then, if many do not perceive the same hand, when it is wrapped up in a complication with inferior causes, when it is not lifted up so high, or so far extended in miraculous performances.

The special providence of God in events here effected or ordered by him, is indeed commonly not discernible without good judgment and great care; it is not commonly impressed upon events in characters so big and clear, as to be legible to every eye, or to any eye not endued with a sharp perspicacity, not applying an industrious heedfulness: the tracts thereof are too fine and subtile to be descried by a dim sight, with a transient glance, or upon a gross view: it is seldom so very conspicuous, that persons incredulous, or any-wise indisposed to admit it, can easily be convinced thereof, or constrained to acknowledge it: it is often (upon many accounts, from many causes) very obscure, and not easily discernible to the most sagacious, most watchful, most willing observers. For, the instruments of Providence being free agents, acting with unaccountable variety, nothing can happen which may not be imputed to them, with some colourable pretence. Divine and human influences are so twisted and knit together, that it is hard to sever them. The manner of divine efficacy is so very soft and gentle, that we cannot easily trace its footsteps. God designeth not commonly to exert his hand in a notorious way, but often purposely doth conceal it. Whereas also it is not fit to charge upon God's special hand of providence any event, wherein special ends of wisdom or goodness do not shine; it is often hard to discover such ends, which usually are wrapt in perplexities: because God acteth variously (according to the circumstances of things, and the disposition, capacity, or state of objects), so as to do the same thing for different ends, and different things for the same end: because there are different ends, unto which Providence in various order and measure hath regard, which our short and narrow prospect cannot reach: because God, in prosecution of his ends, is not wont to proceed in the most direct and compendious way; but windeth about in a large circuit, enfolding many concurrent and subordinate designs: because the expediency of things to be permitted or performed doth not consist in single acts or events, but in many conspiring to one common end: because we cannot apprehend the consequences, nor balance the conveniences of things in order to good ends: because we are apt to measure things by their congruity to our opinions, expectations, and affections: because many proceedings of God depend upon grounds inaccessible to our apprehension; such as his own secret decrees, the knowledge of men's thoughts, close purposes, clandestine designs, true qualifications and merits; his prescience of contingent events, and what the result will be from the combination of numberless causes: because sometimes he doth act in methods of wisdom, and by rules of justice, surpassing our capacity to know, either from the finiteness of our nature, or the feebleness of our reason, or the meanness of our state and circumstances here: because all the divine administration of affairs hath no complete determination or final issue here; that being reserved to the great day of reckoning and judgment. It is farther also expedient that many occurrences should be puzzling to us, to quash our presumption, to exercise our faith, quicken our industry, to engage us upon adoring that wisdom which we cannot comprehend. Upon such accounts, for such causes (which time will not give me leave to explain and exemplify), the special providence of God is often cloudy, is seldom so clear, that without great heed and consideration we can perceive it. But however, to do so is plainly our duty; and therefore possible.

For our reason was not given us to be idle upon so important occasions; or that we should be as brute spectators of what God doeth. He surely in the governance of his noblest creature here discovereth his being, and displayeth his attributes: we therefore carefully should observe it. He thereby (and no otherwise in a public way) doth continually *speak*, and signify to us his mind: and fit it is, that we his

[1] Isa. lii. 10; Exod. xiv. 8; Deut. xxvi. 8; Isa. xxvi. 11,—Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, &c.; Psal. cvi. 7; John xii. 37; Num. xvi. 32, 35, 41.

subjects should hear, should attend to the least intimations of his pleasure.[j] To him thence glory should accrue; the which, who but we can render? and that we may render it, we must know the grounds of it. In fine, for the support of God's kingdom, for upholding the reverence due to his administration of justice among us, it is requisite, that by apparent dispensation of recompenses, duty should be encouraged, and disobedience checked: very foolish therefore we must be, if we regard not such dispensations.

So reason dictateth; and holy Scripture more plainly declareth our obligation to consider and perceive God's doings. To do so, is recommended to us as a singular point of wisdom: *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. Who is wise? and he shall understand these things; prudent? and he shall know them. For the ways of the Lord are right*, &c. We are vehemently provoked thereto: *Understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise?* They are reproved for neglect and defailance, *who do not regard the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hand.* The not discerning Providence, is reproached as a piece of shameful folly; *A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand:* and of woful pravity;[k] *O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but how is it that ye cannot discern this time?*[l] To contemplate and study Providence, is the practice of good men. *I will meditate on all thy works*, saith the Psalmist, chiefly respecting works of this kind: and, *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* It is a fit matter of devotion, warranted by the practice of good men, to implore God's manifestation of his justice and power this way. *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself: lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth.* It is God's manner hereby to notify himself. *The Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth.*[m] He for this very purpose doth interpose his hand; *that men may know it is his hand, and that the Lord hath done it;* that, as it is in Esay, *they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.*[n] He manageth things, so that men may be brought to know, may be induced to acknowledge his authority, and his equity in the management thereof;* that *they may know that he, whose name is Jehovah, is the most High over all the earth:* that *they may say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily there is a God that judgeth the earth.*[o] In fine, the knowledge of God's special providence is frequently represented as a mean of nourishing our faith and hope in him, as a ground of thankfulness and praise to him, as an incentive of the best affections (of holy joy, and humble fear, and hearty love) toward him: wherefore we ought to seek it, and we may attain it.

There are consequently some distinctive marks, or characters, by which we may perceive God's hand: and such may these be which follow (drawn from the special nature, manner, adjuncts, and consequences of events;) upon which may be grounded rules declarative of special providence, such as commonly will hold, although sometimes they may admit exceptions, and should be warily applied.

1. The wonderful strangeness of events, compared with the ordinary course of things, or the natural influence of causes; when effects are performed by no visible means, or by means disproportionate, unsuitable, repugnant to the effect. Sometimes great exploits are achieved, mighty forces are discomfited, huge structures are demolished, designs backed with all advantages of wit and strength are confounded, none knows

[j] Psal. l. 1; lx. 6; lxii. 11.
[k] Psal. cvii. 43; Jer. ix. 24; Hos. xiv. 9; Psal. xciv. 8; xxviii. 5; x. 4; Isa. v. 12; Psal. xcii. 6; (Isa. xxvi. 11 (—Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see.
[l] Luke xii. 56; Matt. xvi. 3.

* God thereby doth support and encourage good men.—He doth thereby convince and confound ill men; Psal. ix. 19, 20.—He thereby doth instruct all men; Isaiah xxvi. 9.
[m] Psal. lxxvii. 12; cxliii. 5; cxi. 2; xciv. 1, 2; ix. 16.
[n] Psal. cix. 27; Isa. xli. 20; (Ezek. vii. 27.)
[o] Psal. lix. 13; lxxxiii. 18; lxvii. 2; lviii. 11.

how, by no considerable means that appear; nature rising up in arms against them; panic fears seizing on the abettors of them, dissensions and treacheries springing up among the actors; sudden deaths snatching away the principal instruments of them. As, when *the stars in their course fought against Sisera:* when the winds and skies became auxiliaries to Theodosius: when *the Lord thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel:* when *the Lord made the host of Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, of horses, of a great host;*—whence *they arose and fled:* when *the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another:* when *the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians* 185,000 *men; and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses:* when the mighty power of Antiochus was, as it is said, to be *broken without hands:* and when, as it is foretold, *a stone cut out of the mountain without hands should brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold.* Such events do speak God to be their cause; by his invisible efficacy supplying the defect of apparent means.[p]

So likewise, when by weak forces great feats are accomplished, and impotency triumpheth over might;* when, as the Prophet saith, *the captives of the mighty are taken away, and the prey of the terrible is delivered:* when *one man,* as is promised, *doth chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight:* when a stripling, furnished only with faith and a pebble, shall knock down a monstrous giant, armed with a helmet of brass and a coat of mail, with a huge target, sword, and spear: when successes arrive like those recorded in Scripture under the conduct of Joshua, Gideon, Jonathan, Asa, Jehosaphat; wherein very small forces by uncouth means did subdue formidable powers: this doth argue that God doth interpose; *with whom,* as it is said, *it is all one to save by many, or by few, and those that have no power;* whose *power is perfected in weakness;* who *breaketh the arm of the wicked,* and *weakeneth the strength of the mighty,* and *delivereth the poor from him that is too strong for him.*[q]

Also, when great policy and craft do effect nothing, but are blasted of themselves, or baffled by simplicity:[r] when cunningly-laid designs are soon thwarted and overturned: when most perspicacious and profound counsellors are so blinded, or so infatuated, as to mistake in plain cases, to oversee things most obvious and palpable: when profane, malicious, subtile, treacherous politicians (such as Abimelech, Achitophel, Haman, Sejanus, Stilico, Borgia, with many like occurring in story) are not only supplanted in their wicked contrivances, but dismally chastised for them: the occurrences do more than insinuate divine wisdom to intervene, countermining and confounding such devices. For, he it is, who, as the Scripture telleth us, *maketh the diviners mad; turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise; taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and turneth down the counsel of the froward headlong.*[s]

Whenever a just cause or honest design, without any support or succour of worldly means (without authority, power, wit, learning, eloquence), doth against all opposition of violence and art prevail: this signifieth him to yield a special countenance and aid thereto, who, to depress human pride, and advance his own glory, *hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the*

* *Vide* Artabani Orat. apud Herod. Polymn. page 246, Hom. Il. ρ. ver. 688.

[p] Judg. v. 20; Aug. de Civ. Dei. v. 26; 1 Sam. vii. 10; 2 Sam. xxii. 14, 15; 2 Kings vii. 6; Psal. lxviii. 5; xlviii. 6; 2 Chron. xx. 23; 2 Kings xix. 35; Dan. viii. 25; ii. 45.

[q] Isa. xlix. 25; Josh. xxiii. 10; Lev. xxvi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 30; 1 Sam. xvii. 5, 40; Judg. vii. 7; 1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Chron. xiv. 11; xx. 12, 17; xiv. 11; 1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Job xii. 21; xxxviii. 15; Psal. x. 15; xxxvii. 17; xxxv. 10; (lxxvi. 5.)

[r] Hom. Od. ψ. ver. 11.

[s] 2 Sam. xv. 31. Ruffinus, St. Paul, d'Ancre, de Luna, &c. Isa. xliv. 25; Job v. 12, 13; (Psal. xxxiii. 10,) βουλὴν πολυτλάκων ἐξέτησιν.

things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are[t] (that are with us in most request and esteem.)

Again, when plots, with extreme caution and secrecy contrived in darkness, are by improbable means, by unaccountable accidents, disclosed and brought to light; *a bird of the air*, as the Wise Man speaketh, *telling the matter; the stones in the wall*, as it is in the Prophet, *crying out* Treason.[u] The King cannot sleep: to divert him, the chronicle is called for; Mordecai's service is there pitched on; an inquiry is made concerning his recompense; honour is decreed him; so doth Haman's cruel device come out. Pity seizeth on a pitiless heart toward one among a huge number of innocents devoted to slaughter: that he may be saved, a letter must be sent: in that, words inserted, suggesting the manner of execution; that carried to the wise King, who presently smelleth it out: so this day's plot was discovered. Such events, whence can they well proceed, but from the all piercing and ever watchful care of him, *whose eyes*, as Elihu said, *are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings? There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity shall hide themselves:* for *hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.*[v]

Also, when ill men by their perverse wiliness do notably befool and ensnare themselves, laying trains to blow up their own designs, involving themselves in that ruin and mischief into which they studied to draw others; as when Saul, exposing David's life to hazard, increaseth his honour; when the Persian nobles, incensing the king against Daniel, do occasion his growth in favour, with their own destruction;[w] when Haman, by contriving to destroy God's people, doth advance them, and rearing a gallows for Mordecai, doth prepare it for himself: when it happeneth according to those passages in the Psalms, *the wicked are taken in the devices that they imagined; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made: His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings shall come upon his own pate:* these are pregnant evidences of God's just and wise providence; for *the Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand.*[x]

All such occurrences, containing in them somewhat, if not downrightly miraculous, yet very admirable, in like manner deflecting from the stream of human affairs, as miracles do surmount the course of nature, most reasonably may, most justly should, be ascribed to the special operation of him, who *only doeth wonderful things.*[y]

2. Another character of special Providence is, the seasonableness and suddenness of events. When that, which in itself is not ordinary, nor could well be expected, doth fall out happily, in the nick of an exigency, for the relief of innocence, the encouragement of goodness, the support of a good cause, the furtherance of any good purpose (so that there is occasion to acknowledge with the Prophet, *Thou didst terrible things, that we looked not for;*)[z] this is a shrewd indication, that God's hand is then concerned; not only the event being notable, but the connexion thereof with circumstances of need being more admirable.

Thus in time of distress and despondency, when a man is utterly forlorn and destitute of all visible relief, when, as the Psalmist speaketh, *refuge faileth him, and no man careth for his soul:* if then εὔκαιρος βοήθεια, *an opportune succour* doth arrive; he is then unreasonable and ingrateful, if he doth not avow a special Providence, and thankfully ascribe that event unto him who is *our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble;*[a] *a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the*

[t] 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.
[u] Eccles. x. 20; Hab. ii. 11.
[v] (Psal. cxxi. 4;) Job xxxiv. 21, 22; xxvi. 6; Psal. cxxxii. 2, &c.; Heb. iv. 13; Amos ix. 2.
[w] 1 Sam. xviii. 25; Dan. vi. 24.
[x] Psal. x. 2; ix. 15; xxxv. 8; cxl. 5; vii. 15; lvii. 6; vii. 16; v. 10; ix. 16.
[y] Psal. lxxii. 18; lxxxvi. 10.
[z] Isa. lxiv. 3.
[a] Psal. cxlii. 4; (xliv. 25; cviii. 12;) Heb. iv. 16; Psal. xlvi. 1. ix. 9; xliv. 24; xxxvii. 39; xxvii. 5; lxix. 14; xviii. 6.

storm, a shadow from the heat :[b] *the hope of Israel, and the saviour thereof in time of trouble.*[c] This is that for which, in the 107th Psalm, the divine goodness is so magnificently celebrated; this is the burden of that pathetical rapture, wherein we by repeated wishes and exhortations are instigated to bless God; his wonderfully relieving the children of men in their need and distress: this is that which God himself in the Prophet representeth as a most satisfactory demonstration of his providence: *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys*, &c. *That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel, hath created it.*[d]

So also, when pestilent enterprises, managed by close fraud, or by impetuous violence, are brought to a head, and come near to the point of being executed; the sudden detection or seasonable obstruction of them, do argue the ever-vigilant eye, and the all powerful hand to be engaged: God ever doth see those deceitful workers of iniquity laying their mischief in the dark; he is always present at their cabals and clandestine meetings wherein they brood upon it. He often doth suffer it to grow on to a pitch of maturity, till it be thoroughly formed, till it be ready to be hatched, and break forth in its mischievous effects; then in a trice he snappeth and crusheth it to nothing. God beholdeth violent men setting out in their unjust attempts, he letteth them proceed on in a full career, until they reach the edge of their design, then instantly he checketh, putteth in a spoke, he stoppeth, he tumbleth them down, or turneth them backward. Thus was Haman's plot dashed,[e] when he had procured a royal decree, when he had fixed a time, when he had issued forth letters to destroy God's people. Thus was Pharaoh overwhelmed, when he had just overtaken the children of Israel.[f] Thus were the designs of Abimelech, of Absalom, of Adonijah, of Sanballat, nipped. Thus, when Sennacherib with an unmatchable host had encamped against Jerusalem, and had to appearance swallowed it, God did *put a hook into his nose, and turned him back into his own land.*[g] Thus, when Antiochus was marching on furiously, to accomplish his threat of turning Jerusalem into a charnel, a noisome disease did interrupt his progress.[h] Thus, when the profane Caligula did mean to discharge his bloody rage on the Jews for refusing to worship him, a domestic sword did presently give vent to his revengeful breath.[i] Thus also, when Julian had by his policy and authority projected to overthrow our religion, his plot soon was quashed, and his life snapped away by an unknown hand.[j] Thus, *whenever the enemy doth come in like a flood* (threatening immediately to overflow and overturn all things), *the Spirit of the Lord doth lift up a standard against him ;*[k] that is, God's secret efficacy doth suddenly restrain and repress his outrage. This usually is the method of Divine Providence.[l] God could prevent the beginnings of wicked designs ;* he could supplant them in their first onsets; he could anywhere sufflaminate and subvert them: but he rather winketh for a time, and suffereth the designers to go on till they are mounted to the top of confidence, and good people are cast on the brink of ruin ;† then ἀπὸ μηχανῆς,‡ surprisingly, unexpectedly he striketh in with effectual succour; so declaring how vain the presumption is of impious undertakers; how needful and sure his protection is over innocent people; how much reason the one hath to dread him, and the other to confide in him. Then is God seen, then his care and power will be acknowledged, when he snatcheth us from the jaws of danger, when *our soul doth escape as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.*[m]

[b] Isa. xxv. 4; xxxii. 2.
[c] Jer. xiv. 8; Job xxxiii. 18; Psal. cvii. 8, 15, 21, 31.
[d] Isa. xli. 17, &c.
[e] Esth. iii.
[f] Exod. xiv.
[g] 2 Kings xix. 28.
[h] 2 Mac. ix. 4.
[i] Joseph. xviii. 12.
[j] Chrysost. in Babyl. Orat. 2; Naz. Orat. 4.
[k] Isa. lix. 19.
[l] (Job xxxviii. 11.)
[m] Psal. cxxvi. 7.

* Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐκ προοιμίων, μηδὲ εὐθέως, ἔθος αὐτῷ τοιοῦτον, &c. Vide Chrys. ad Olymp.
† Ὅταν κορυφωθῇ, ὅταν αὐξηθῇ, &c.—Ibid.
‡ Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus Inciderit.

3. Another character of special Providence is, the great utility and beneficialness of occurrences, especially in regard to the public state of things, and to great personages, in whose welfare the public is much concerned. To entitle every petty chance that arriveth to special Providence, may signify lightness; to father on God the mischiefs issuing from our own sin and folly, may savour of profaneness: but to ascribe every grand and beneficial event unto his good hand, hath ever been reputed wisdom and justice.* *It hath been* (saith Balbus in Cicero) *a common opinion among the ancients, that whatever did bring great benefit to mankind, was never done without divine goodness toward men.*† And well might they deem it so, seeing to do so is most agreeable to his nature, and appertaining to his charge, and may appear to be so by good argumentation *a priori*. For, that God doth govern our affairs, may be deduced from his essential attributes; and, consequently, that he doth in especial manner order these things, which are the most proper and worthy objects of his governance. God indeed doth not disregard any thing; he watcheth over the least things by his general and ordinary providence; so that nothing in nature may deviate from its course, or transgress the bounds prescribed to it. He thereby *clotheth the grass of the field; he provideth for the raven his food, and the young lions seek their meat from him;* without his care *a sparrow doth not fall to the ground;* by it, *all the hairs of our head are numbered.*[n] But his more special hand of providence is chiefly employed in managing affairs of great moment and benefit to mankind; and peculiarly those which concern his people, who do profess to worship and serve him; whose welfare he tendereth with more than ordinary care and affection. He therefore hath a main stroke in all revolutions and changes of state: he presideth in all great counsels and undertakings; in the waging of war, in the settlement of peace, in the dispensation of victory and good success.[o] He is peculiarly interested in the protection of princes, the chief *ministers of his kingdom;* and in preservation of his people, the choice object of his care, from violent invasions, and treacherous surprises; so as to prevent disasters incident, or to deliver from them. *It is he that*, as the Psalmist says, *doth give salvation unto kings; who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.* It is he that continually *keepeth Israel without ever sleeping or slumbering;* who *is the hope of Israel, and the saviour thereof;* who *is in the midst of her, that she shall not be moved;* who hath declared, that *he will help her, and that right early;* that *he will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance;* that *no weapon formed against* his Church *shall prosper;* that *salvation belongeth to the Lord, and his blessing is upon his people.*[p] When, therefore, any remarkable event, highly conducing to the public good of Church and State (supporting them in a good condition, or rescuing them from imminent danger), doth appear, it is most reasonable, and most just, to ascribe the accomplishment thereof to God's hand. When any pernicious enterprise levelled against the safety of prince and people, is disappointed, it is fit we should profess and say, *The righteous man hath hewn the snares of the ungodly in pieces.*[q]

4. Another like mark of special providence is, the righteousness of the case, or the advantage springing from events unto the maintenance of right, the vindication of innocence, the defence of truth, the encouragement of piety and virtue. God naturally is the judge of right, the guardian of innocence, the patron of truth, and promoter of goodness. *The Lord is a refuge to the oppressed: He is a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widow: He will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor: He executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed: He blesseth the righteous, and compasseth him with favour as with a shield: He preserveth*

* Magna dii curant, parva negligunt.—*Cic. ii. de Nat. Deor.*

† Quicquid magnam utilitatem generi adferret humano, id non sine divina bonitate erga homines fieri arbitrabantur.—*Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. ii.

[n] Matt. vi. 30; Psal. civ. 14; cxlvii. 9; Job xxxviii. 39; Psal. civ. 21; Matt. x. 29, 30.

[o] Dan. iv. 25; Psal. lxxv. 7; xlvi. 9; Prov. xxi. 31; 1 Chron. xxix. 11; Wisd. vi. 4.

[p] Psal. cxliv. 10; Eccles. x. 20; Psal. xviii. 50; xxi. 1; xxxiii. 16; cxxi. 4; Jer. xiv. 8; Psal. xlvi. 5; xciv. 14; Isa. liv. 17; Psal. iii. 8.

[q] Psal. cxxix. 4. (O. T.)

the souls of the righteous, and delivereth them out of the hand of the ungodly: All his paths are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.[r] Whenever, therefore, right is oppressed, or perilously invaded; when innocence is grossly abused, or sorely beset; when piety is fiercely opposed, or cunningly undermined; when good men, for the profession of truth or the practice of virtue, are persecuted, or grievously threatened with mischief; then may we presume that God is not unconcerned, nor will prove backward to reach forth his succour. And when, accordingly, we find that signal aid or deliverance do then arrive, it is most reasonable to suppose that God particularly hath engaged himself, and exerted his power in their behalf. For, seeing it is his proper and peculiar work; seeing it most becometh and behoveth him to appear in such cases, affording his helpful countenance; when he doeth it, we should be ready to acknowledge it. In such a case, *The hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies*, saith the Prophet.[s]

5. Another character is, the correspondence of events to the prayers and desires of good men. For seeing it is the duty and constant practice of good men, in all exigencies to implore God's help; seeing such prayers have, as St. James telleth us, a mighty energy, it being God's property, by them to be moved to impart his powerful assistance;[t] seeing God most plainly and frequently hath declared, and obliged himself by promise, that he will hear them, so as to perform whatever is expedient in their behalf; seeing we have many notable experiments recorded in Scripture (as those of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Elias, Daniel, and the like) of prayers bringing down wonderful effects from heaven, with which the testimonies of all times and the daily experience of good men do conspire;* seeing the presumption of such efficacy is the main ground and encouragement of devotion:[u] we have great reason, whenever events are answerable to such prayers, to ascribe the performance of them to God's hand: great reason have we in such cases to cry out with David, *Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand*:[v] just cause have we, according to his pattern, thankfully to acknowledge God's favour in answering our petitions: *The king* (said he) *shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! For thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the requests of his lips.*[w]

6. Again, the proceedings of God (especially in way of judgment, or of dispensing rewards and punishments) discover their original by their kind and countenance, which usually do bear a near resemblance, or some significant correspondence, to the actions upon which they are grounded. *Punishments* (saith a Father) *are the forced offspring of willing faults;*† and answerably, rewards are the children of good deeds; and God, who formeth both, doth commonly order it so, that the children in their complexion and features shall resemble their parents. So that the deserts of men shall often be legible in the recompenses conferred or inflicted on them:‡ not according to the natural result of their practice, but with a comely reference thereto; apt to raise in them a sense of God's hand, and to wring from them an acknowledgment of his equity in so dealing with them. So when humble modesty is advanced to honour, and ambitious confidence is thrown into

[r] Psal. ix. 9; lxviii. 5; x. 14; Job xxxvi. 15; Psal. cxl. 12; Psal. cii. 6; ix. 8; v. 12; xcvii. 10; xxxvii. 12; xxv. 10; cxlvi. 6.

[s] Isa. lxvi. 14.

[t] Psal. lxix. 13; cii. 1, 2; cxl. 6; lx. 10; lvi. 1; James v. 16; Psal. lvi. 9; xxxiv. 15; xci. 15; cxlv. 18.

* Πόσαι μυριάδες ἀνδρῶν καὶ φάλαγγες, ὅσας ἱκετεύοντες μόνον ἠμεῖς, καὶ Θεὸς βουληθεὶς κατειργάσατο.—Naz. Orat. 4.

How many myriads and squadrons of men were there, whom we only praying, and God willing, discomfited? saith Nazianzene in reference to the defeating of Julian's design.

† Ἐκουσίων κακῶν ἀκούσια ἔκγονα.—Damasc.

‡ Τῆς κολάσεως ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὸν τρόπον μιμεῖται.—Chrys. ἀνδρ. 19.

[u] 2 Chron. xiv. 11; xx. 9; xxxii. 20; 2 Kings xix. 15; 1 Kings xvii. 1, &c.

[v] Psal. xx. 6.

[w] Psal. xxi. 1, 2; xxx. 2; lxvi. 17; cxviii. 5.

disgrace; when liberality is blessed with increase, and avarice is cursed with decay of estate; when craft incurreth disappointment, and simplicity findeth good success; when haughty might is shattered, and helpless innocence is preserved; when the calumnious tongue is blistered, *the flattering lips are cut off*, the blasphemous throat is torn out: when bloody oppressors have *blood given them to drink*, and come to welter in their own gore[x] (an accident which almost continually doth happen;) when treacherous men by their own confidants, or by themselves, are betrayed; when retaliations of vengeance are ministered, extorting confessions like to that of Adonibezek, *As I have done, so God hath requited me;* deserving such exprobrations as that of Samuel to Agag, *As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women;* grounding such reflections as that concerning Antiochus, *Thus the murderer and blasphemer having suffered most grievously, as he entreateth other men, so died he a miserable death;*[y] by such occurrences the finger of God doth point out and indicate itself; they speak themselves immediately to come from that just God, who doth ἀνταποδιδόναι, render to men answerably to their doings; who payeth men their due, sometimes in value, often *in specie*, according to the strictest way of reckoning. *He* (as the Prophet saith) *is great in counsel and mighty in work: for his eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruits of his doings.*[z] This indeed is a sort of administration most conformable to God's exact justice, and most conducible to his holy designs of instructing and correcting offenders. He therefore hath declared it to be his way. *It is* (saith the Prophet, directing his speech to the instruments of divine vengeance upon Babylon) *the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.* And, *the day of the Lord* (saith another Prophet, concerning the like judgment upon Edom) *is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.* Thereby doth God mean to declare himself the Judge and Governor of men: For, *I will* (saith he in Ezekiel) *do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them, and they shall know that I am the Lord.*[a] Farther,

7. Another argument of special Providence is, the harmonious conspiracy of various accidents to one end or effect. If that one thing should hit advantageously to the production of some considerable event, it may with some plausibility be attributed to fortune, or common providence: yet that divers things, having no dependence or coherence one with the other, in divers places, through several times, should all join their forces to compass it, cannot well otherwise than be ascribed to God's special care wisely directing, to his own hand powerfully wielding, those concurrent instruments to one good purpose. For it is beside the nature, it is beyond the reach of fortune, to range various causes in such order. Blind fortune cannot apprehend or catch the seasons and junctures of things, which arise from the motions of causes in their nature indifferent and arbitrary: to it therefore no such event can reasonably be imputed.* So, to the bringing about our Lord's passion (that great event, which is so particularly assigned to God's hand), we may observe the monstrous treachery of Judas, the strange malignity of the Jewish rulers, the prodigious levity of the people, the wonderful easiness of Pilate, with other notable accidents, to have jumped in order thereto. So also, that a malicious traitor should conceive kindness toward any, that he should be mistaken in the object of his favour, that he should express his mind in a way subject to deliberate examination, in terms apt to breed suspicion where the plot was laid; that the counsellors should despise it, and yet not smother it; that the king instantly, by a light darted into his mind, should descry it: these things so happily meeting, may argue God (who mouldeth

[x] Psal. xii. 3; Rev. xvi. 6.
[y] Judg. i. 7; 1 Sam. xv. 33; 2 Mac. ix. 28.
[z] Luke xiv. 12; Rom. xii. 19; Jer. xxxii. 19; Psal. lxii. 12

* — *ἃ κατὰ τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ μαρτύρων πρῶτος ἐφεῦρε κολαστήρια. ταῦθ' ὑπομείναντα δικαιοτάτῃ ψήφῳ.* — Euseb. lib. i. de Vit. Const. de Maximino, sub finem. Is oculos qui eruerat Christianis, ipse visu orbatus.

[a] Jer. l. 15; li. 49; Obad. 15; Ezek. xxxv. 15; vii. 27; Job. xxxiv. 11.

the hearts, who guideth the hands, who enlighteneth the minds of men) to have been engaged in the detection of this day's black conspiracy.

Such are some characters of special Providence; each of which singly appearing in any concurrence would in a considerate man breed an opinion thereof; each of them being very congruous to the supposition of it; no such appearances being otherwise so clearly and cleverly explicable, as by assigning the divine hand for their principal cause. But the connexion of them all in one event[b] (when divers odd accidents do befall at a seasonable time, according to exigency for the public benefit, the preservation of princes, the security of God's people, the protection of right, the maintenance of truth and piety, according to the wishes and prayers of good men, with proper retribution and vengeance upon the wretched designers of mischief; such a complication, I say, of these marks in one event) may thoroughly suffice to raise a firm persuasion, to force a confident acknowledgment concerning God's providence, in any considerate and ingenuous person: it readily will dispose such persons upon any such occasion to say, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*[c]

Notwithstanding, therefore, any obscurity or intricacy that sometime may appear in the course of Providence, notwithstanding any general exceptions that may by perverse incredulity be alleged against the conduct of things, there are good marks observable, whereby (if we are not very blockish, drowsy, supine, lazy, or froward; if we will consider wisely, with industrious attention and care, with minds pure from vain prejudices, and corrupt affections) we may discern and understand God's doing.* Which to do is the first duty specified in my text: upon which having insisted so largely, I shall (hoping you will favour me with a little patience) briefly touch the rest.

II. It is the duty of us all, upon such remarkable occurrences of Providence, to *fear* God: *All men*, it is said, *shall fear*. It is our duty in such cases to be affected with all sorts of fear; with a fear of awful dread, with a fear of hearty reverence, with a fear of sober caution; yea, sometimes with a fear of dejecting consternation. When God doth appear *clad with robes of vengeance and zeal*, denouncing and discharging judgment; when he representeth himself *fearful in praises, terrible in his doings toward the children of men, working terrible things in righteousness;* it should strike into our hearts a dread of his glorious majesty, of his mighty power, of his severe justice, of *his glorious and fearful name:*[d] it should instil into our minds a reverence of his excellent wisdom, his exceeding goodness, his perfect holiness: it should breed in our souls a solicitous care of displeasing and provoking him: it should cause us in our hearts to shake and tremble before him. Then is that of the Psalmist to be put in practice: *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.*[e] Such dispensations are in their nature declarative of those divine attributes which do require such affections: they are set before our eyes to cast us into a very serious and solemn frame; to abash and deter us from offending, by observing the danger of incurring punishments like to those which we behold inflicted upon presumptuous transgressors; upon those who do heinously violate right, or furiously impugn truth, or profanely despise piety; who earnestly prosecute wicked enterprizes; who persecute the friends of God with outrageous violence, or treacherous subtilty. Upon infliction of such punishments, *all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously*,[f] saith God himself, declaring the nature and drift of them. They do plainly demonstrate, that there is no presuming to escape being detected in our close machinations by God's all-seeing eye; being de-

* Εἰ μὴ σημεῖα καὶ θαύματα, ἀλλ' ἐοικότα σημείοις τράγματα, δείγματα τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ προνοίας, καὶ ἀντιλήψεως ἀφάτου.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. i.

[b] *Vide* Diod. Sic. lib. xv. p. 482.

[c] Psal. cxviii. 23.

[d] Job xxxvii. 22; xiii. 11; Psal. lii. 6; lxviii. 35; Dan. vi. 26; Isa. lix. 17; Exod. xv. 11; Psal. lxvi. 3, 5; lxv. 5; (cxxx. 3;) Deut. xxviii. 58; x. 17.

[e] Isa. lxvi. 2; Psal. xxxiii. 8; cxiv. 7.

[f] Deut. xvii. 13; xiii. 11; xix. 20.

feated in our bold attempts by God's almighty hand; being sorely chastised for our iniquity by God's impartial judgment. Extremely blind and stupid, therefore, must we be, or monstrously sturdy and profane, if such experiments of divine power and justice do not awe us, and fright us from sin. *When the lion roareth, who will not fear? When the trumpet is blown in the city, shall not the people be afraid?* Shall he *at* whom *the mountains quake, and the hills melt;* whose *indignation the nations are not able to abide; at* whose *wrath the earth doth shake and tremble; at* whose *reproof the pillars of heaven are astonished;*[g] shall he visibly frown, shall his wrath flame out, shall he shake his rod of exemplary vengeance over us, and we stand void of sense or fear? If so, then surely a brutish dotage, or a gigantic stoutness, doth possess us.

III. We are in such cases obliged to *declare God's work;* that is, openly to acknowledge and avow, to applaud and celebrate the special providence of God, with his adorable perfections displayed in such events; to the glory of God's name, in expression of our reverence and gratitude toward him, for the common edification of men; for which uses they greatly serve, to which purposes they are designed. We should not view such providential occurrences, like dumb beasts, with a dull or careless silence, as if we did not mind them, or were not concerned in them: we should not suppress or stifle the knowledge of them in our breasts, as if they were barely matters of private consideration and use; we should not let our observation and resentment of them be fruitless, so as to yield no honour to God, no benefit to man. But we should propagate and convey them into others: in so loud a tone, in so lively a strain we should vent them, as thereby to excite the notice, to inflame the affections of all men within the reach of our voice; provoking them to conspire with us in acknowledgment of God's power and wisdom, in acclamation to his justice and goodness. This is the due improvement of our *glory;*[h] that peculiar excellency, wherein chiefly (except in our reason) we do surpass all creatures; that without which our reason itself is more than half unprofitable; that whereby we put our best member to its best use. For this we have the devout Psalmist's pious resolutions, his exemplary performances, his zealous wishes, his earnest exhortations, to guide and move us: *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.* So did he signify his resolution. *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.* So his conscience testified of his practice. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men: that they would offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare his works with gladness.* So doth he pour forth his desire. *O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name: show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. Come and see the works of God. Sing forth the honour of his name, make his praise glorious. O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.*[i] So doth he summon, so doth he urge us to this practice; and in his deportment we may see our duty.

IV. It is peculiarly the duty and practice of good men upon such occasions to feel and to express religious joy. *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord.* Good men indeed then have great matter, and much cause, on many accounts, to be glad.

It becometh them to rejoice, as having an universal complacence in God's proceedings, as gratefully relishing all dispensations of Providence. They, as pious, are disposed to bless and praise God for all things incident, and cannot therefore

[g] Hos. xi. 10; Amos iii. 6, 8; Nah. i. 5; Jer. x. 10; Psal. civ. 32; xviii. 7; lxxvi. 8; cxliii. 2; Job xxvi. 11; (Isa. lxiv. 3; Ezek. xxi. 10; Isa. xxv. 3; lix. 18, 19.)

[h] Psal. lvii. 8.

[i] Psal. cxlv. 5, 6, 11; (lxxvii. 12; ix. 14;) xl. 10; cvii. 8, 15, 21, 22, 31; xlvii. 1; xcvi. 2, 3; cv. 2; lxvi. 5, 2; (lxvi. 16;) cv. 1.

but rejoice; joy being an inseparable companion of gratitude and praise. Hence, *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* Hence, *The voice of salvation and rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous.* Hence, *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright;*[j] is an exhortation backed with a very good reason.

They cannot but find satisfaction in observing God's providence notably discovered, to the confirmation of their faith, and cherishing their hopes; together with the conviction of infidelity, and confusion of profaneness. *Our heart* (saith the Psalmist) *shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*[k]

It is to them no small pleasure to behold God's holy perfections illustriously shining forth; and the glory of him (who is the principal object of their love, their reverence, their hope, and confidence) to be conspicuously advanced. *Rejoice*, saith the Psalmist, *O ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth.*[l]

It is to them ground of exceeding comfort, to receive so clear pledges of God's love and favour, his truth and fidelity, his bounty and munificence toward them, expressed in such watchful care over them, such protection in dangers, such aid in needs, such deliverance from mischiefs, vouchsafed to them. Such benefits they cannot receive from God's hand, without that cheerfulness which always doth adhere to gratitude.*

I will (saith David) *sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me. Because thou hast been my helper, therefore in the shadow of thy wings I will rejoice. My lips shall greatly rejoice in thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities. The Lord hath done great things for us, wherefore we are glad. Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them.*[m]

They are also greatly refreshed with apprehension of the happy fruits sprouting from such dispensations of Providence; such as are the benefit of mankind, the peace and prosperity of the civil state, the preservation, settlement, enlargement, advancement of God's Church; the support of right, the succour of innocence, the maintenance of truth, the encouragement and furtherance of piety; the restraint of violence, the discountenance of error, the correction of vice and impiety. In these things they, as faithful servants of God, and real friends of goodness, as bearing hearty good-will and compassion to mankind, as true lovers of their country, as living and sensible members of the Church, cannot but rejoice. Seeing by these things their own best interest (which is no other than the advantage of goodness), their chief honour (which consists in the promotion of divine glory), their truest content (which is placed in the prosperity of Zion), are highly furthered; how can they look on them springing up, without great delight and complacence? *O* (saith the Psalmist) *sing unto the Lord—for he hath done marvellous things. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* And, *Sing, O heavens*, crieth the Prophet, *and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O ye mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted.* And, *When* (saith he) *ye shall see this* (the comfort of God's people), *your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.*[n]

* Sen. de Benef. ii. 22. Cum accipiendum judicaverimus, hilares accipiamus, profitentes gaudium, &c.—*Vide* ib. 30.

[j] Psal. xcvii. 11; cxviii. 15; xxxiii. 1.

[k] Psal. xxxiii. 21; xiii. 5; cvii. 42.

[l] Psal. xcvii. 12; xxx. 4; xcvii. 8, 9; xlviii. 11.

[m] Psal. xiii. 6; lxiii. 7; lxxi. 23; xxxi 7; cxxvi. 3; v. 11.

[n] Psal. cxxii. 6; (1 Cor. xii. 26;) Psal. cxviii. i. 3; Isa. xlix. 13; Psal. xcvi. 11, 13; Isa. lxvi. 14.

Even in the frustration of wicked designs, attended with severe execution of vengeance on the contrivers and abettors of them, they may have a pleasant satisfaction; they must then yield a cheerful applause to Divine justice. *The righteous* (saith the Psalmist) *shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance:* and, *Let the wicked* (saith he) *perish at the presence of God; but let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.*[o] Whence, at God's infliction of judgment upon Babylon, it is said in Jeremy, *Then the heaven, and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon;*[p] and at the fall of mystical Babylon, in the Apocalypse, it is likewise said, *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.*[q] Farther,

V. The next duty prescribed to good men in such case is to *trust in God*, that is, to have their affiance in God (upon all such like occasions, in all urgencies of need) settled, improved, and corroborated thereby. This indeed is the proper end, immediately regarding us, of God's special providence, disclosing itself in any miraculous, or in any remarkable way; to nourish in well-disposed minds that faith in God, which is the root of all piety, and ground of devotion.[r] Such experiments are sound arguments to persuade good men, that God doth govern and order things for their best advantage; they are powerful incentives, driving them in all exigences to seek God's help; they are most convincing evidences that God is abundantly able, very willing, and ever ready to succour them. *They* (saith the Psalmist) *that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* And, *I* (saith he) *will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings; for thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.* It is indeed a great aggravation of diffidence in God, that having *tasted and seen that the Lord is good;*[s] having felt so manifest experience of divine goodness; having received so notable pledges of God's favourable inclination to help us; we yet will not rely upon him. As a friend, who by signal instances of kindness hath assured his good-will, hath great cause of offence, if he be suspected of unwillingness in a needful season to afford his relief; so may God most justly be displeased, when we (notwithstanding so palpable demonstrations of his kindness), by distrusting him, do in effect question the sincerity of his friendship, or the constancy of his goodness toward us.[t]

VI. Good men upon such occasions should *glory: All the upright in heart shall glory.* Should *glory;* that is, in contemplation of such providences feeling sprightly elevations of mind and transports of affection, they should exhibit triumphant demonstrations of satisfaction and alacrity. It becometh them not in such cases to be dumpish or demure; but jocund and crank in their humour, brisk and gay in their looks, pleasantly flippant and free in their speech, jolly and debonair in their behaviour: every way signifying the extreme complacency they take in God's doing, and the full content they taste in their state. They with solemn exultation should triumph in such events, as in victories achieved by the glorious hand of God in their behalf, in approbation of their cause, in favour toward their persons, for their great benefit and comfort.[u] They may (not as proudly assuming to themselves the glory due to God, but as gratefully sensible of their felicity springing from God's favour) *se jactare, se laudibus efferre* (as the Hebrew word doth signify;) that is, in a sort boast, and commend themselves as very happy in their relation to God, by virtue of his protection and aid. They may (not with a haughty insolence, or wanton arrogance, but with a sober confidence and cheerfulness) insult upon baffled impiety,[v] by their expressions and demeanour upbraiding the folly, the baseness, the impotency and wretchedness thereof, in competition with the wisdom, in opposition to the power of God, their friend and patron. For such

[o] Psal. lviii. 10; Job xxii. 19; Psal. lxviii. 2, 3. [p] Jer. li. 48.
[q] Rev. xviii. 20. [r] Psal. lxxviii. 7.)
[s] Psal. ix. 10; lxi. 3, 4, 5; cxv. 9, &c.; cxxx. 7; xxxiv. 8.
[t] Ecclus. ii. 10. [u] Psal. cxxvi. 1, &c.
[v] Psal. lii. 6, 7,—The righteous shall laugh at him, *or*, deride him, *in this manner:* Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength.

carriage in such cases we have the practice and the advice of the Psalmist to warrant and direct us. *In God* (saith he) *we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; and I will triumph in the works of thy hands. We will rejoice in thy salvation; and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy name, and to triumph in thy praise.*[w] Such should be the result (upon us) of God's merciful dispensations toward his people.

I shall only farther remark, that the word here used is by the Greek rendered *ἐπαινεθήσονται, they shall be praised:* which sense the original will bear, and the reason of the case may admit. For such dispensations ever do adorn integrity, and yield commendation to good men. They declare the wisdom of such persons, in adhering to God, in reposing upon God's help, in embracing such courses which God doth approve and bless: they plainly tell how dear such persons are to God; how incomparably happy in his favour, how impregnably safe under his protection; as having his infallible wisdom and his invincible power engaged on their side.[x] This cannot but render them admirable, and their state glorious in the eyes of all men; inducing them to profess with the Psalmist, *Happy is the people, which is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.* And of such a people, that declaration from the same mouth is verified, *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day long, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted: for thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy favour their horn shall be exalted.*[y]

Such are the duties suggested in our text, as suiting these occasions, when God in a special manner hath vouchsafed to protect his people, or to rescue them from imminent mischiefs, by violent assault or by fraudulent contrivance levelled against them. I should apply these particulars to the present case solemnized by us: but I shall rather recommend the application to your sagacity, than farther infringe your patience, by spending thereon so many words as it would exact. You do well know the story, which by so many years repetition hath been impressed on your minds: and by reflecting thereon—

You will easily discern, how God, in the seasonable discovery of this execrable plot (the masterpiece of wicked machinations ever conceived in human brain, or devised on this side hell, since the foundation of things), in the happy deliverance of our Nation and Church from the desperate mischiefs intended toward them, in the remarkable protection of right and truth, did signalize his providence.

You will be affected with hearty reverence toward the gracious author of our salvation, and with humble dread toward the just awarder of vengeance upon those miscreant wretches, who *digged this pit and fell into it themselves.*

You will be ready with pious acknowledgment and admiration of God's mercy, his justice, his wisdom, to declare and magnify this notable work done by him among us.

You must needs feel devout resentments of joy for the glory arising to God, and the benefits accruing to us, in the preservation of God's anointed, our just Sovereign, with his royal posterity: in the freeing our country from civil broils, disorders, and confusions; from the yokes of usurpation and slavery; from grievous extortions and rapines; from bloody persecutions and trials, with the like spawn of disastrous and tragical consequences, by this design threatened upon it; in upholding our Church (which was so happily settled, and had so long gloriously flourished) from utter ruin: in securing our profession of God's holy truth, the truly catholic faith of Christ (refined from those drossy alloys, wherewith the rudeness and sloth of blind times, the fraud of ambition and covetous designers, the pravity of sensual and profane men, had embased and corrupted it), together with a pure worship of God,

[w] Psal. xliv. 8; xcii. 4; xx. 5; cv. 3, 2; cvi. 47.

[x] Psal. cxxvi. 3; cxxv. 1, &c.; cxxxviii. 1, &c.

[y] Psal. cxlix. 15; xxxiii. 12; lxxxix. 16, 17.

an edifying administration of God's word and sacraments, a comely, wholesome, and moderate discipline, conformable to divine prescription and primitive example; in rescuing us from having impious errors, scandalous practices, and superstitious rites, with merciless violence obtruded upon us: in continuing therefore to us the most desirable comforts and conveniences of our lives.

Your farther considering this signal testimony of divine goodness, will thereby be moved to hope and confide in God for his gracious preservation from the like pernicious attempts against the safety of our Prince and welfare of our country, against our peace, our laws, our religion; especially from Romish zeal and bigotry (that mint of woful factions an combustions, of treasonable conspiracies, of barbarous massacres, of horrid assasinations, of intestine rebellions, of foreign invasions, of savage tortures and butcheries, of *holy leagues* and *pious frauds*, through Christendom, and particularly among us), which as it without reason damneth, so it would by any means destroy, all that will not crouch thereto.

You will, in fine, with joyous festivity, glory and triumph in this illustrious demonstration of God's favour toward us; so as heartily to join in those due acclamations of blessing and praise.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

Alleluiah; Salvation, and glory, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments.

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.[z]

[z] Psal. cxxiv. 6; (lxviii. 32;) Rev. xix. 1, 2; xv. 3; Psal. lxxii. 18, 19.

SERMON XII.

A CONSECRATION SERMON.*

PSAL. CXXXII. 16.—*I will also clothe her priests with salvation.*

THE context runs thus: *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.* I WILL ALSO CLOTHE HER PRIESTS WITH SALVATION: *and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud*, &c.

If all, not only inaugurations of persons, but dedications even of inanimate things to some extraordinary use, hath been usually attended with special significations of joy and festival solemnity; with great reason the consecration of a person to so high and sacred a function, as that of a Christian Bishop (that is, of a prince, or principal pastor in God's Church), requires most peculiar testimonies of our gratulation and content: the face of things ought then to be serene and cheerful; the thoughts of men benign and favourable; the words comfortable and auspicious, that are uttered upon such occasion. And that ours at present should be such, the subject as well as the season of our discourse doth require. Words few, but pregnant, and affording ample matter for our best affections to work upon; and which more particularly will engage us, both to a hearty thankfulness for past benefits, and to a confident expectation of future blessings; while they acquaint us with the ancient exhibition of a gracious promise, remind us of the faithful performance thereof hitherto, and assure us of its certain accomplishment for the future. The occasion whereof was this:—

* Henry the Seventh's Chapel, July 4, 1663, at the Bishop of Man's consecration.

King David, moved by a devout inclination to promote God's honour, and benefit the Church, had vowed to build a magnificent temple, imploring God's propitious concurrence with, and approbation of, his design. Whereupon Almighty God not only declares his acceptance of that pious resolution, but rewards it with a bountiful promise, consisting of two parts; one conditional, relating to David's children and posterity, that they in an uninterrupted succession should for ever enjoy the royal dignity, in case they did constantly persist in observing his covenant, and the testimonies that he should teach them; the other more absolute, that however, what he chiefly intended concerning God's established worship and the perpetual welfare of the Church, God would have an especial care that it should fully and certainly be accomplished: that he would forever fix his residence in Sion: that he would protect and prosper it, and all that did belong thereto; especially those that did most need his favour and assistance, the poor, the priests, and the saints (or *gentle ones*) חסידיו. This is briefly the importance of the general promise wherein is comprehended that particular one whereon we are to treat; and in which we may observe—

1. The Promiser, *I*.

2. The persons who are especially concerned in the promise, *her Priests*.

3. The thing promised, *clothing with salvation*.

I. I say, the Promiser, *I*; that is, the Lord; the most true, the most constant, the most powerful God; most true and sincere in the declaration of his purpose, most constant and immutable in the prosecution, most powerful and uncontrollable in the perfect execution thereof: whose *words are right, and all* whose *works are done in truth*: who *will not break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips*: whose *counsel shall stand, and* who *will do all his pleasure*.[a] These glorious attributes and perfections of his, so often celebrated in Holy Writ, do ground our reliance upon all God's promises, and do oblige us, notwithstanding the greatest improbabilities or difficulties objected, to believe the infallible performance of this.

[a] Psal. xxxiii. 4; lxxxix. 34; Isa. lxvi. 10.

II. The persons whom the promise mainly regards, *her Priests*. *Priests*, that is, persons peculiarly devoted to, and employed in sacred matters; distinguished expressly from the *poor* (that is, other meek and humble persons;) and from the *saints* (that is all other good and religious men.) And, *her* Priests; that is, the Priests of Sion: of that Sion which *the Lord hath chosen;* which *he hath desired for his* permanent *habitation;* which he hath resolved to *rest* and *reside in for ever*.[b] Whence it plainly enough follows, that the Priests and Pastors of the Christian Church are hereby, if not solely, yet principally, designed;—which interpretation, because it is in a manner the foundation of our subsequent discourse, and by some it may perhaps not be readily admitted, I shall endeavour farther to confirm by these few arguments.

1. Because the covenant here mentioned is not, as to the main parts thereof, of a conditional or temporary nature, but absolute and perpetual; and must therefore be understood to respect the Christian Church (that of the Jews being long since rejected, their temple demolished, their Sion utterly forsaken.)[c] For although one particular contained therein, concerning the continual succession of David's posterity in the regal authority over Israel, hath a condition explicitly annexed (and, consequently, the effects depending upon the performance of that condition were contingent and mutable;) yet all the rest of this covenant (or promise) is conceived in terms peremptory and expressly importing perpetuity. *This is my rest for ever*, עדי־עד; that is, as the Greek translators render it, εἰς αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος (*in seculum seculi*), that is, to the end of this world; as εἰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων denotes the end of all worlds, or the most perfect sempiternity. And that it doth really in this case denote a proper and unlimited perpetuity, is also evident by those explications thereof in the eighty-ninth Psalm, where the very same covenant is, as to some parts thereof, more largely recorded: *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David: his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me:*

[b] Contra, 2 Chron. vii. 21.
[c] *Vide* 2 Chron. vii. 16.

it shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.[d] No words can express more fully a perpetual duration, or at least one co-extended with the duration of the world, than those do. And the Prophet Jeremy, referring also to this very covenant, and particularly to this very clause thereof, thus expresses the matter: *Thus saith the Lord, If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.*[e] But farther,

2. The completion of this individual promise is both by the Prophets foretold, and expressed by the Evangelists, to appertain to the times of the Gospel. Ye heard even now the words of Jeremy, which are by him applied to those times, when God would cause the *Branch of righteousness* (that is, Jesus of Nazareth, our blessed Saviour) *to grow up unto David, who should execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days* (saith he farther) *shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called* (or rather, *which he shall be called*, as not only the vulgar Latin and the Greek interpreters, but the Chaldee also read it), *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*[f] Likewise in the fifty-fifth of Isaiah, God thus invites the Gentiles: *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David;*[g] that is, I will ratify that everlasting covenant, which in your behalf I once made with David, and will confer on you those favours which I faithfully promised him; relating to this very promise also. For both in Solomon's prayer (2 Chron. vi.), which in all probability was indited about the same time, and upon the same occasion with this Psalm, and in the eighty-ninth Psalm, the benefits of the same covenant are called *the mercies of David. O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed, remember the mercies of David thy servant,*[h] saith Solomon: and, *My mercy*, saith God, *will I keep with him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him:* and, *My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him;* that is, *my faithful* (or *sure*) *mercy;*[i] τὰ ὅσια πιστὰ, as the LXX. and St. Paul with them in the Acts,[j] render this place of Isaiah. And in the song of Zachary we have one passage of this promise cited, and applied to the times of the Gospel: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath visited and redeemed his people; and hath raised up a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets:*[k] viz. by the mouth of his prophetical Psalmist here, where it is said, *There will I make the horn of David to bud;* and in the parallel Psalm lxxxix., *In my name shall his horn be exalted.*[l] To omit those many places where our Saviour, in correspondence to this promise, is affirmed to *possess the throne of his father David*, and *to rule over the house of Jacob for ever.*[m] Moreover,

3. That by the Sion here mentioned is not chiefly meant that material mountain in Judea, but rather that mystical Rock of Divine grace and evangelical truth, upon which the Christian Church, the only everlasting temple of God, is immoveably seated, is very probable (or rather, manifestly certain) by the Prophets' constant acception thereof in this sense, when they assign the character of perpetual durability thereto. As in Isaiah lx., where he thus prophesies of the Christian Church: *The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The City of the Lord, the Sion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings,*[n] &c. And the Prophet Micah,

[d] Psal. lxxxix. 35, 36, 37.
[e] Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21; *Vide* 2 Chron. vii. 16.
[f] Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16. [g] Isa. lv. 3.
[h] 2 Chron. vi. 42. [i] Psal. lxxxix. 28, 24.
[j] Acts xiii. 34. [k] Luke i. 68, 69, 70.
[l] Psal. lxxxix. 24.
[m] *Vide* Luke i. 32, edit. Curcel.
[n] Isa. lx. 14, 15, 16.

speaking of *the last days* (that is, of the evangelical times, *when the mountain of the house of the Lord should be established in the top of the mountains*), saith thus: *And I will make her that halted a remnant; and her that was cast far off, a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Sion from henceforth even for ever.*[o] And the Prophet Joel, speaking of the same times (when God *would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh*), hath these words: *So shall ye know, that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Sion my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.*[p] All which places, no man can reasonably doubt, and all Christians do firmly consent, to respect the Christian Church. To which we may add that passage of the author to the Hebrews (chap. xxii. ver. 22:) *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;* that is, to the Christian Church.

4. The manner of this covenant's delivery, and confirmation by the Divine oath, argues the inconditionate, irreversible, and perpetual constitution thereof; for to God's most absolute and immutable decrees this most august and solemn confirmation doth peculiarly agree. So the Apostle to the Hebrews seems to intimate: *Wherein* (saith he) *God, willing more abundantly to demonstrate the immutability of his counsel* (ἐπιδεῖξαι τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς), *interposed an oath.*[q]

We may therefore, I suppose, upon these grounds solidly and safely conclude, that this promise doth principally belong, and shall therefore infallibly be made good, to the Christian priesthood; to those who, in the Christian Church, by offering spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, by directing and instructing the people in the knowledge of the evangelical law, by imploring for and pronouncing upon them the divine benedictions, do bear analogy with and supply the room of, the Jewish priesthood.

From which discourse we may, by the way, deduce this corollary: That the title of *priest*, although it did (as most certainly it doth not) properly and primarily signify a Jewish sacrificer (or slaughterer of beasts), doth yet nowise deserve that reproach, which is by some, inconsiderately (not to say profanely) upon that mistaken ground, commonly cast upon it; since the Holy Scripture itself, we see, doth here, even in that sense (most obnoxious to exception) ascribe it to the Christian pastors. And so likewise doth the Prophet Isaiah: *And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord:*[r] speaking (as the context plainly declares) of the Gentiles, which should be converted and aggregated to God's Church. And the Prophet Jeremiah: *Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.*[s] Which prophecy also evidently concerns the same time and state of things, of which the Prophet Malachi thus foretels: *For, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering.*[t] It were desirable, therefore, that men would better consider, before they entertain such groundless offences, or pass so uncharitable censures upon either words, or persons, or things. But I proceed to the

III. Particular, which is the matter of the promise, *clothing with salvation.* Where we may observe—

First, That the usual metaphor of being *clothed*, doth in the sacred dialect denote a complete endowment with, a plentiful enjoyment of, or an entire application to, that thing, or quality, with which a person is said to be clothed. So is God himself said to be *clothed with majesty and strength.* And David prays, that they might be *clothed with shame and dishonour, that did magnify themselves against him.*[u] And in Ezekiel, *the princes of the isles*, being amazed by the ruin of Tyre, are said *to clothe themselves with trembling.* And that bitter adversary of David (in Psalm cix. 18) did *clothe himself with cursing, as with a garment.* And Job avouched of himself,

[o] Mic. iv. 1, 7.
[p] Joel ii. 28; iii. 16.
[q] Heb. vi. 17.
[r] Isa. lxvi. 21.
[s] Jer. xxxiii. 18.
[t] Mal. i. 11.
[u] Psal. xciii. 1; xxxv. 26; cix. 29.

I put on rigtheousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was a robe and a diadem. And St. Peter advises us to *put on*, or to *be clothed with, humility.* Finally, Isaiah introduces our Saviour speaking thus: *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom deckeeth himself with ornaments; and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*[v] So that (as by these instances we may discern), *to be clothed with salvation*, is to be perfectly endowed therewith; to be invested with it as with a garment, which wholly encloseth and covereth the body, so that no part is left unguarded and unadorned thereby.

Secondly, But now what is that *salvation* with which the *priests* of Sion shall be thus clothed? I answer: *Salvation*, when it is put absolutely, and not conjoined with any particular object (or term from which), doth in the Hebrew language properly signify a deliverance from, or remotion of, all sorts of inconvenience; and, consequently, an affluence of all good things: and, in effect, the same which other languages call felicity and prosperity, or design by terms equivalent to those: the Hebrews having hardly any other word so properly correspondent to those, as this word *salvation.* Whence that title of *Saviour*, and *the God of salvation*,[w] so often attributed to Almighty God, imports as much as, the Dispenser of all good gifts; the great Benefactor, Assister, and Protector of men: and to *save*, is promiscuously used for, to relieve the needy, to comfort the sorrowful; to restore the sick to his health, the prisoner to his liberty, the captive to his country; to defend the weak from injury, and the humble from contempt; to deliver the distressed from imminent danger, the innocent from unjust condemnation, the slandered from undeserved reproach: in a word, all the effects of God's goodness and power, the whole work of the Divine providence and beneficence, are hereby expressed.

We will recite one or two of those many places which confirm this notion. Psalm lxxxv. 9: *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. His salvation is nigh;* that is, his loving care attends upon them, to assist and preserve them; which in Psalm cxlv. ver. 19, is thus otherwise expressed: *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them.* And again, Psalm cxlix. 4: *The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation:* that is, he will, by his good providence, dispose them into a convenient and decent condition of life. And again, Psalm cxliv. 10: *It is he that giveth salvation unto kings;* that is, by whose gracious disposal they prosper, and are preserved in dignity, plenty, and safety.

I will not, by citation of places, labour to confirm so obvious a notion: it may suffice for that purpose, that the supreme accomplishment of all happiness, the enjoyment of perfect bliss in heaven, is, in agreement with this Jewish acception of the word, most commonly styled *salvation.* But I must add, that whereas salvation may relate either to the outward estate of a man's body, life, and fortunes, or to the internal dispositions of the mind; to our present condition in this world, or to our future and eternal estate: it doth seem here (I say not, to exclude the latter altogether, yet) more directly and principally to respect the former, viz. that external and temporal welfare, which is conspicuous and visible in this world. My reason is, because the other parts of this prophetical promise do, in their most natural acception, signify that outward prosperity wherewith God would vouchsafe to bless his Church: that abundant *benediction of her store*, that *satisfying her poor with bread*, that *joyful exultation of her saints*, that *clothing her enemies with shame*, being expressions properly denoting a state of external good weal and comfort; and, in consonance to them, require that we thus likewise understand this phrase; the priests being also questionless designed to partake in this glorious felicity of the Church. Which is also confirmed by other prophecies of the same tenor and intention: as particularly that in Jer. xxxi. concerning the recollection of Israel, and re-

[v] Ezek. xxvi. 16; Job xxix. 14; 1 Pet. v. 5; Isa. lxi. 10; lix. 17.

[w] Deus. Σωτὴρ, sæpe Platoni.

demption of the spiritual Sion, it is said, *I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness*, &c.[x]

Now, although we may adventure safely to interpret the declarations of the Divine favour according to the most comprehensive sense of which the words are capable, where they are conceived (it being the manner of the immensely good God to exceed, rather than to be deficient in, the performance of his word; and to surpass the expectations he hath raised in us, than anywise to disappoint them:) yet, however, the least we can imagine here promised to the *priests of Sion*, will comprehend these three things:—

1. A free and safe condition of life: that they be not exposed to continual dangers of ruin; of miserable sufferance, or remediless injury: that the benefits of peace, and law, and public protection, shall particularly appertain to them; so that their adversaries (if any they happen to have) shall not be incited, by hope of reward or impunity, to hurt their persons, rifle their goods, disturb their quiet; but that they shall enjoy good degrees of security, liberty, and tranquillity in this world.

2. A provision of competent subsistence for them: that their condition of life be not wholly necessitous, or very penurious, destitute of convenient accommodations, or depending altogether for them upon the arbitrary benevolences of men, which is, at best, but a more plausible kind of beggary: but that they shall be furnished with such reasonable supplies, as are requisite to encourage them in the cheerful performance of their duty.

3. A suitable degree of respect, and so high a station among men, as may commend them to general esteem, and vindicate them from contempt: that they be not reputed among the dregs and refuse of the people; that their persons be not base and despicable, their names made the objects of vulgar obloquy, their functions become prostitute to profane irrision; but that some considerable authority, some more than ordinary regard and veneration accrue unto them from the high relations which they bear, and from the sacred business which they manage.

All this at least (according to the most moderate interpretation of the phrase) that abundant *salvation* doth imply, wherewith God hath promised to *invest the priests of Sion*.

We may therefore presume, or rather not presume, but confidently rely upon, and comfort ourselves in the expectation of God's faithful continuance to fulfil this promise. We may assure ourselves, that neither the secret envy of them who repine at those encouragements which God's providence hath conferred on priests, nor the open malice of those that furiously oppugn their welfare, shall ever prevail to overwhelm them with extreme misery, penury, or disgrace; since no endeavour of earth or hell can ever be able to reverse this everlasting decree of Heaven, or to defeat that irresistible power which is engaged to its execution. No inferior force can strip them naked of that salvation, wherewith the Supreme Truth hath promised to clothe them.

Which confidence of ours may be improved, by considering the reasons that might induce Almighty God to resolve, and promise thus favourably in behalf of his priests. (For though we cannot penetrate the incomprehensible depths of the Divine counsel, nor should ever peremptorily conclude concerning the determinate reasons of his actions: yet when the wisdom of his proceedings doth clearly approve itself to our understandings, we ought readily to acknowledge it, and humbly to praise him for it.) Now the reasons why Divine Providence should undertake to preserve the priesthood in safety, to procure for them liberal maintenance, and to raise them above a state of scorn and infamy, may be especially these three:—

1. It concerns God's honour.
2. The good of the Church requires so.
3. Equity and the reason of the case exacts it.

In prosecuting which heads of discourse, I shall not seem to you, I hope, to transgress the rules of modesty or decency. There be certain seasons, wherein confessedly it is not only excusable, but expedient also, to commend one's self; as when a man is falsely accused,

[x] Jer. xxxi. 14.

or unjustly afflicted. And with greater reason sometime men are allowed to praise the country where they were born and bred, the family to which they are allied, the society to which they are the more especially related. And if at this time I assume the like liberty, the occasion, I hope, will apologize for me. It becomes not me to be an adviser, much less a reprover, in this audience: may I therefore, with your favourable permission presume to be a commender, or, if you please, a pleader for the welfare of this sacred Order, although myself an unworthy and inconsiderable member thereof. I say, therefore—

I. God's honour is concerned in the safe, comfortable, and honourable estate of his priests; and that upon account of those manifold relations, whereby they stand allied, appropriated, and devoted to himself.

They are in a peculiar manner his servants. *The servant of the Lord* (saith St. Paul) *must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach.*[y] *The servant of the Lord;* who's that? Are not all men God's servants? is not he Lord of all? Yes; but a Christian priest, such as Timothy was, is by way of excellency so styled. All men owe subjection, obedience, and homage to God: but the priests are (his ὑπηρέται, his λειτουργοί) his ministers, his officers, his immediate attendants, his domestics, as it were, and menial servants;[z] that approach his person, that tread the courts of his house, that wear his proper badges, that are employed in his particular business. And is it then for God's honour, to suffer them to be abused, to want convenient sustenance, to live in a mean and disgraceful condition? Would it not redound to the discredit of an earthly prince, to premit, that the attendants on his person, the officers of his court, the executors of his edicts, should have the least injury offered them, should fare scantily or coarsely, should appear in a sorid garb? Are they not therefore by especial privileges guarded from such inconveniences? And shall the great King and Lord of all the world be deemed less provident for, less indulgent (not to say less just) unto his servants? Servants, I say, and those not of the lowest rank, nor appointed to the vilest drudgeries; but such as are employed in the most honourable charges, and are entrusted with his most especial concernments.

They are his stewards. *A bishop* (saith St. Paul) *must be blameless, as the steward of God.*[a] If the Church be οἶκος Θεοῦ, *God's house*, or *family*,[b] as it is called; and the priests the οἰκονόμοι, the stewards of that house, the comptrollers of that family; it is surely no mean station they obtain therein. The distribution of his bread (the bread of life, his holy word), and the dispensation of his most precious goods (the holy mysteries), are committed to their care and prudence.[c] *Who then* (saith our Saviour) *is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?*[d] Who but the priests, who are therefore styled both προεστῶτες, ἡγούμενοι, κυβερνήσεις (*presidents*, *guides*, *rulers*), and ποιμένες (*feeders* or *pastors*) of the Church?

Yea, they are οἰκοδόμοι also, the builders of that house, founding it by initial conversion, rearing it by continued instruction, covering and finishing it by sacramental obsignation of divine grace. *As a wise architect* (saith St. Paul) *I have laid the foundation, and another builds upon it.*[e]

They are συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ, *co-operators with God*;[f] that manage his business, and drive on his designs: the solicitors of his affairs; the masters of his requests: his heralds,* that publish his decrees, denounce his judgments, proclaim his pardons and acts of grace unto his subjects; that blazon his titles, and defend his rightful authority in the world: yea, his ministers of state; the ministers (I say, *absit invidia*) of his most glorious spiritual kingdom (which is peculiarly denominated the kingdom of God;) the orderly administration of which, its advancement, its preservation, and its enlargement, are especially commended to their diligence and fidelity.

[y] Joel ii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 24.
[z] 1 Cor. iv. 1; Rom. xv. 16.

* Κήρυκες.
[a] Tit. i. 7. [b] 1 Tim. iii. 15.
[c] *Vide* Matt. xxiv. 45; 1 Cor. iv. 1.
[d] Luke xii. 42. [e] 1 Cor. iii. 10.
[f] 1 Cor. iii. 9.

They are, lastly, God's ambassadors,[g] delegated by him to treat of peace, and solicit a fair correspondence between heaven and earth. *Now then* (saith St. Paul) *we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. As though God did beseech you by us:*[h] see, they manage God's concernments, and in a manner represent his person. At least, if the Apostles were more properly God's ambassadors, the present ministers of religion are his agents, and residents here among men, designed to pursue the same negociations commenced by them. Now you know, by the law of nations, and common consent of all men, all manner of security, good entertainment, and civil respect, hath been ever acknowledged due to ambassadors, and public ministers: their employment hath been esteemed honourable, their persons held sacred and inviolable; and whatsoever discourtesy hath been showed unto, or outrage committed upon them, hath been interpreted done to him from whom they derive their commission, whose person they represent. And so truly the bad usage of God's priests, if not directly and immediately, does yet really and truly, according to moral estimation, terminate on God himself, and reflect on his honour, and prejudice his religion; a due regard to which cannot be maintained without proportionable respect to the ministers thereof.[i] The basest of the people may serve to be priest to Jeroboam's calves, but not become the ministry of the God of Israel.

Do we not see the reverence of civil government upheld more by the specious circumstances, than by the real necessity thereof; by the magnificent retinue, and splendid ornaments of princely dignity, than by the eminent benefits of peace and justice springing thence? Shall not (not only the greatest inward worth, but) the highest nobility, if basely attired, badly attended, slenderly accommodated, pass unregarded, yea disregarded by us?—men being generally either unable to discern, or unwilling to acknowledge, excellency divested of sensible lustre. Religion, therefore, must be well habited, or it will be ill respected: the priests must wear a comely (if not a costly) livery, or God their master's reputation will be impaired in popular fancy.

Consider David's reasoning: *Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains;*[j] and compare such discourse therewith as this; and judge candidly, whether they have not some parity: Lo, my attendants are clad with the finest purple, God's ministers are covered with the coarsest sackcloth; my people surfeit with dainties, his servants pine away for scarcity; my courtiers are respectfully saluted, his priests scornfully derided; no man dare offend mine, every one may trample on his officers.

And lest we should imagine God himself altogether void of such resentments, or such comparisons impertinent, consider that disdainful expression of his: *If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.*[k] The same testimonies of respect that we show our governors, God, it seems, expects from us in all kinds, and may reasonably much greater.

Nor is it a matter of slight consideration, how plentiful provision, in the policy devised and constituted by God himself, was made for the priests; how God assumes the immediate patronage of them, and appropriates the matter of their sustenance unto himself. *The priests* (saith the law), *the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren: the Lord is their inheritance.*[l] So that then, it seems, no man could withhold any part of the priests' maintenance, without sacrilegious encroachment on God's own right, and robbing him of his due (which is the greatest security of an estate imaginable.)

[g] *Vide* Mal. ii. 7,—For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.

[h] 2 Cor. v. 20.

[i] John xiii. 20,—What you have done to these, &c. Matt. x. 40, and xxv. 40,—He that receiveth you, receiveth him that sent you.

[j] 1 Chron. xvii. 1.

[k] Mal. i. 8.

[l] Deut. xviii. 1, 2.

How likewise (next to the prince) the highest dignity and authority was then conferred on the priests: to them the interpretation of law, to them the decision of doubtful cases, did appertain; with severe injunctions to comply with their determinations. See how the business is inculcated: *If there arise a matter too hard for thee, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place, which the Lord shall choose, shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence, which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken to the priest, that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away evil from Israel.*[m] Observe with how eminent a power God then thought fit to endow his priests.*

And though we are not in all cases obliged punctually to follow those political prescriptions; yet is the reason of them perpetual, and the example venerable: especially since the custom of all times, and the reason of all the world, doth in a sort conspire to back it.

The first priest we meet with in Scripture is Melchizedek;[n] a king also; and such a one, as the patriarch Abraham (a prince also himself, and what is somewhat more, just then a conqueror), in the midst of his triumphal heights, was not ashamed to acknowledge his superior, to honour him with a tribute of his spoils, and to receive a benediction from him. The next (if I mistake not) is Potipherah, priest of On, whose daughter was not thought by the king of Egypt an unequal match for Joseph, his chief favourite, and the next in dignity to himself in that flourishing kingdom.[o] (Though such an alliance would perhaps be thought derogatory to the worships of our days.) The third is Revel, or Jethro, priest of Midian, the father-in-law likewise of the illustrious Moses; a man, as of approved wisdom, so doubtless of considerable dignity too. And the next to him (in order of story) is the venerable Aaron, no meaner man than the brother of him who was *king in Jeshurun.*[p] Thus all nations, wise and ignorant, civil and barbarous, were by one common instinct (as it were) of natural reason prompted, by conferring extraordinary privileges of honour and conveniences on their priests, to express their reverence of the Deity, and their affection to religion.*

I will not ransack the closets of antiquity, nor with needless ostentation produce the Egyptian Hierophantæ, the Persian Magi, the Gaulish Druids, the Caliphs, and Mufti's of other nations, to show what pre-eminences of respect they enjoyed, what powerful sway they bore in their respective countries;[q] how the most weighty affairs, both of peace and war, were commonly directed by their oracular dictates. It shall suffice to observe, that the gallant Romans (whose devout zeal to religion Polybius[r] himself, no especial friend of theirs, could not forbear to admire and applaud), I say, that the most wise and valiant Romans did set so high a value upon the priestly order, that if their principal magistrates (the prætors and consuls themselves) did casually meet with one of Vesta's priests, they caused immediately those dreadful rods, the ensigns of their authority, to submit; and they themselves respectfully gave place, as if they meant to confess those priests in a man-

* Καὶ γὰρ ἐπόπται πάντων, καὶ δικασταὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων, καὶ κολασταὶ τῶν κατεγνωσμένων οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐτάχθησαν, saith Josephus. The priests were constituted supervisors of all things, and judges of controversies, and punishers of offences. 2. *in Apionem.*

[m] Deut. xvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. [n] Gen. xiv.

* Vid. Aristot. Pol. vii. 9.—Οὔτε γὰρ γεωργὸν, οὔτε βάναυσον ἱερέα καταστατέον· ὑπὸ γὰρ τῶν πολιτῶν πρέπει τιμᾶσθαι τοὺς θεούς.

[o] Gen. xli. 45. [p] Deut. xxxiii. 5.

[q] Porph. περὶ Ἀποχ. lib. iv. § 16. Cæs. de bell. Gall. lib. vi. [r] Polybius, lib. vi.

ner their betters.* Nor did they among them of the most noble extraction, and of the highest dignity in the commonwealth (even after many glorious exploits achieved by them), scornfully disdain, but did rather ambitiously affect to be admitted into the college of priests: insomuch that, after the dissolution of the republic, the Emperors thought good to assume the pontifical dignity to themselves, supposing the office too honourable, the title too magnificent, for a subject. For they wisely, it seems, and honestly, adjudged it no debasement of their quality, no diminution to their personal excellency, to be employed in the service of the immortal gods; whom they acknowledged the patrons of their country, the protectors of their safety: nor that they less deserved of the public, who rightly ordered their religious devotions, than they who prudently advised in the senate, or fought valiantly in the field: for that the good success of public undertakings did as much, or more, depend upon the favourable disposition of Divine Providence, as upon the careful endeavour of human industry.

I cannot forbear to allege that so grave and pertinent speech of Cicero, which is the exordium of his oration *ad Pontifices*: "*Cum multa divinitus, pontifices, a majoribus nostris inventa atque instituta sunt; tum nihil præclarius, quam quod vos eosdem et religionibus deorum immortalium, et summæ reip. præesse voluerunt: ut amplissimi et clarrissimi cives rempubl. bene gerendo, religiones sapienter interpretando, remp. conservarent.*" A wholesome and politic institution he thought it, conducible to the public good and safety, that the civil and sacred authority should be united in the same persons; that it was as well for the interest of the state, as for the credit of religion, that the priests should be men of honour, or (which is all one) honourable men priests.

All which evinces plainly, that it is in no wise the result of a generous heart (for what nation ever produce so many brave spirits as that?) but rather proceeds from an inconsiderate delicacy of humour (or from a profane haughtiness of mind), to loathe, as now men do, and despise that employment, which in its own nature is of all most noble and most beneficial to mankind. For if to be a courtier in a particular country is of all others the most honourable relation; and to wait upon a mortal king is accounted a most worthy function: to be peculiarly God's servant, and in religious addresses immediately to attend on him, must consequently be the most excellent preferment in the world, which is God's kingdom.* And if to supply a man's bodily needs, to restore his liberty, to save his life, be works of generous beneficence; how much more is it so, by good conduct and instruction of men, to adorn their souls with virtue, to free them from the bondage of sin, rescue them from eternal ruin?

Our magnanimous ancestors, who erected as well trophies of their invincible courage abroad, as monuments of their incomparable piety at home, and equally by both did purchase immortal renown to their ingrateful posterity (for not to imitate good example, is the greatest ingratitude;) they, I say, were otherwise disposed; to whose honest devotion we owe those handsome privileges, and those competent revenues, which the priesthood still enjoys; and which are so maligned by this untoward age, not less degenerate in spirit, than corrupt in manners: when all wisdom, and virtue, and religion, are almost in most places grown ridiculous: when the serious use of reason is become (in vulgar opinion) the most impertinent and insignificant thing in the world: when innocence is reputed a mere defect of wit, and weakness of judgment: integrity a fond pertinacity of humour; constancy of mind and gravity of demeanour, a kind of sullen morosity or uncouth affectation of singularity; and all strict practice of Christian duty incurs the imputation of some new-found opprobrious name, one or other. No wonder, then, when religion itself hath so much decayed in its love and esteem, if the priests, its professed guardians, do partake in its fortune. Nor is it to be

* Πάντα τὰ πράγματα Ῥωμαίοις εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ἀνήγετο.—Plut. in Marcello. Sen. in Controv.

* Itane plus decet hominis, quam Dei famulum nominari? ac terreni quam cœlestis Regis officialem, altioris ducitur dignitatis? Qui Clero militiam, forum anteponit Ecclesiæ, divinis profecto humana, cœlestibus præferre terrena convincitur.—*Bern. Epist.* 78.

feared but that, when the predominant vanities of the age are somewhat decocted, and men grow weary of their own inconvenient follies; whenever (not a fierce zeal for some whimsical model, or some paradoxical opinion, but) a sober esteem of, and a cordial affection to, virtue and genuine piety, do begin to revive in the breasts of men; the love and reverence of the clergy will return. For it will be ever true, what was once said (though dictated only from the reason and experience of a heathen),[s] *Qui bona fide colit Deos, amat et sacerdotes;* "He that sincerely worships God, will heartily love his priests." But, not to insist longer on this reason—

II. The good of the church requires, that the priesthood be well protected, well provided for, and well regarded. That men be converted from iniquity, induced to the sincere practice of virtue, is the chief good of the Church, that to which the favour of God is annexed, and upon which the salvation of souls doth rely. And this good mainly depends, partly upon the due execution of the priestly office, partly upon the fit disposition of the people to comply therewith: and to both those effects the comfortable estate of the priesthood is conducible and requisite. The priest must be capable to instruct with advantage, and the people disposed to learn with readiness: he must lead, and they follow cheerfully in the paths of righteousness. Which alacrity, how can he be master of, whose mind care and grief, the inseparable companions of a needy estate, do continually distract and discompose? whose spirit is dejected with constant regret and frequent disappointments? Can he be free and expedite in the discharge of his duty who is perplexed with the difficulties, and encumbered with the varieties of secular business, such as the exigencies of a narrow condition do necessarily induce? No: few there be that, with Epictetus, can philosophate in slavery; or, like Cleanthes, can draw water all the day, and study most of the might.

The priests are bound (for the propagation of truth and right, and for the reclaiming of men from error and sin, that is, for the most important good of the Church), as the Apostles are often related to have done, παῤῥησιάζεσθαι, *to speak all out* (or to use an unconfined liberty of speech;) to exhort to the practice of virtue, as our Saviour did, μετ' ἐξουσίας, *with licence and authority;* to deter from vice; as St Paul enjoins Titus, μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς, *with an all-commanding* and imperious *strain;* and (as those faithful brethren did, encouraged by St. Paul's example), τολμᾶν ἀφόβως λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον, *to dare undauntedly to utter the word* of truth: they are obliged to deal impartially with all; to flatter no man;[t] to admonish, yea, and (with prudence, seasonably) to reprove the greatest of men: not to respect the persons of the rich, nor to dread the faces of the most terrible among men. And how shall this necessary courage be engendered, be cherished, be preserved, in the breast of him who grovels upon the ground, and crouches under the depressing loads of want and disgrace?* What engines are able to raise the spirits of men above the ordinary fountains from which they spring, their fortunes? what props can sustain them at that due pitch, destitute of solid strength, wealth, and respect? With what face shall a pitiful underling encounter the solemn looks of an oppressing grandee? with what hope of success in his forlorn habit, shall he adventure to check the vicious extravagances of a ruffling gallant? Will he dare to contradict the opinion, or to disallow the practice, of that wealthy or this powerful neighbour, by whose alms, it may be, he is relieved, and supported by his favour?

But admit it possible a man be both extremely indigent and sufficiently resolute (that is, strong without food, and fat by digesting the thin air:) with what regard then shall his free and faithful advice be entertained? Shall not his moderate confidence be accounted impudence; his open sincerity of speech be

[s] Statius, Epist. Dedic. in v. lib. Sylvarum.

* ——plurima sunt quæ
Non audent homines pertusa dicere læna.
Juven. Sat. 5.
Αἰδὼς τοι πρὸς ἀνολβίῃ θάρσος δὲ πρὸς ὄλβῳ.
Hes. i. 317.
Πρὸς ἅπαντα δειλὸς ὁ πένης ἐστὶ πράγματα,
Καὶ πάντας αὐτοῦ καταφρονεῖν ὑπολαμβάνει.
Menand.

[t] Acts ix. 27; xiv. 3; xix. 8; Ephes. vi. 19, &c.; Luke iv. 32; Tit. ii. 15; Phil. i. 14.

styled unmannerly presumption; his minding others of their duty adjudged a forgetfulness of his own condition, or a disorderly transgressing the due limits thereof? If he be not ashamed of the truth, will not the truth be ashamed of him? Shall he not prejudice more by the meanness of his garb, than further by the force of his reason, that good cause which he maintains? Will men respect his words, whose person they despise? Will they be willingly counselled or patiently reproved by him, whom they esteem, yea, whom they plainly see, so much their inferior? No: the same words which proceed from the mouths of men in eminent dignity, are not the same when they are uttered by those of base degree.* Weak and ineffectual are the most eloquent harangues of beggarly orators; obscure like themselves, and unobserved, the most notable dictates of poor mercenary pedants. The authority of the speaker doth usually more incline, than the weight of the matter. It was the observation of the wise son of Sirach: *When a rich man slips, he hath many helpers; he speaketh things not to be spoken, and yet men justify him: the poor man miscarried, and they farther rebuked him; he spake discreetly, and yet could have no place. When a rich man speaketh, every man holdeth his tongue; and his words they extol to the clouds: but if the poor man speak, they say, Who is this? and if he stumble, they will help to overthrow him.*"† And Solomon himself notes the same: *The poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.*[v] Not only those that swell with pride and swim in plenty, but even the meanest of the people, will be apt to contemn his instructions, whom they perceive in few or no circumstances of life to excel them. If the preacher's condition be not, as well as his pulpit, somewhat elevated above the lowest station, few will hear him, fewer mind his words, very few obey him. Job's case deserves well to be considered. While he flourished in wealth and reputation, all men attended to his counsel, and admired his discourse. *The princes* (saith he) *refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth: the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again, and my speech dropped upon them.*[w] So officiously attentive were all men to Job in his prosperity. But when the scale was turned and he became depressed in estate, no man minded either him or his discourse, except it were to despise and scorn both. *But now* (saith he) *they that are younger than I, have me in derision; whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. I am their song, yea, I am their by-word. They abhor me, they fly far from me, and spare not to spit in my face; because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me.*[x] If Job, a person who so equally and moderately, yea, so humbly, and courteously, and bountifully used his prosperity, as we find he did, was notwithstanding in his adversity so generally slighted and abhorred, what shall their lot be who never enjoyed those advantages?[y] what regard shall their wholesome advice find? what efficacy their most pathetical exhortations obtain? what passion their faint breath raise in men's benumbed hearts? No more, certainly, than their mean condition shall procure among men either of friendship or esteem.

We see, therefore, how Almighty God, that he might conciliate credit unto, and infuse a persuasive energy into the words of his Prophets and Apostles, was pleased to dignify them with extraordinary gifts of foretelling future events and doing miraculous works: their doctrine, it seems (though of itself most reasonable and plausible), being not sufficient to convince the hearers, without some remarkable excellency in the teachers, challenging the people's awful regard, and exciting their attention. Otherwise

* Τὸ δ' ἀξίωμα, κἂν κακῶς λέγῃ, τὸ σὸν
Πείσει· Λόγος γὰρ ἐκ τ' ἀδοξούντων ἰὼν,
Κἀκ τῶν δοκούντων αὐτὸς, οὐ ταυτὸν σθένει.
Eurip. in Hecuba.

† Κάλλιστα Μουσῶν φθέγγεται πλουτῶν ἀνήρ.

" Ecclus. xiii. 22, 23. [v] Eccles. ix. 16.

[w] Job xxix. 9, 10, 11, 21, 22.

[x] Job xxx. 1, 9, 10, 11; Prov. xiv. 20,—The poor is hated even of his own neighbour; but the rich hath many friends.

[y] Job xxx. 25.

how pitifully scant a draught those poor fishers of men had caught by the common allurements only of innocent life and rational discourse, I leave you to imagine. And where such extraordinary commendations are wanting, is it not reasonable that the need of them should be supplied by ordinary and probable expedients?

I might farther add, how a necessitous and despicable estate doth commonly not only disturb the minds and deject the spirits of men, but distempereth also their souls and vitiateth their manners; rendering them not only sad and anxious, slavish and timorous, but greedy also and covetous, peevish and mutinous, rude and ignorant; engages them in sordid company, and tempts them to unworthy courses. From which one cause how scandalous effects, and how prejudicial to the Church's both honour and safety, have proceeded, I need not for to say, since woful experience too loudly proclaims it.

I might add, moreover, that the priests do confer to the good of the State; which is secured and advanced by the sincere instruction of men in duties of obedience, justice, and fidelity; and by maintenance of good conscience among men. So that, if things be rightly considered, it will be hard to find a better commonwealth's man than a good minister.

Seeing, therefore, the good of the Church, upon various accounts, is so much concerned in the priest's encouragement, welfare, and respect, it is very fitting they should have them. Which consideration I conclude with that serious admonition of the Apostle to the Hebrews, wherein the substance of what hath been spoken on this point is contained: *Obey your rulers* (or *guides*), *and submit to them: for they watch for your souls, as they that are to give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with complaint:* for this is unprofitable for you.*[a] Ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ τοῦτο· that is, *for this pays no taxes, quits no scores; turns to no account, is nowise advantageous for you;* but rather (for there is a μείωσις in those words) is hurtful and detrimental to you. But farther,

III. Common equity and the reason of the case exacts, that safety, competent subsistence, and fitting respect, be allowed to the priests. If you consider their personal qualities, who, I pray, do [commonly] better deserve those advantages than they? Those qualities, I say, which result from a liberal, a sober, a modest education in the schools of wisdom, and under the influences of good discipline. If birth (that is, at best, an imaginary relation to the gallantry of an ancestor) entitle men to honour; if the cheap favours of fortune be so highly prized and admired; if riches (that is, the happy results of industry in trivial matters) do easily purchase respect: what may not they pretend to, whose constant (and not always unsuccessful) endeavour it hath been to deserve well, to cultivate their minds, and regulate their manners?

True worth, indeed, is not confined to any particular order of men; yet I should wrong none, by saying that it is nowhere more plentifully to be found than in this. What is it that doth advance men's nature, that adorns their minds, that commends their persons to especial regard? Is it knowledge? *The priests' lips preserve it;* their discourse doth diffuse it.[a] Is it virtue? Whence have more or greater examples thereof proceeded, than from them? Is it piety? It is their proper business; it hath been always, in some measure, their care to promote it: that ignorance and barbarity, dissoluteness and irreligion, have not long since, like a deluge overspread the face of the world, none, I suppose, will be so unjust as to deny, in greatest part due to their vigilant endeavours. Even those improvements of wit and eloquence, which are employed to their disgrace and disadvantage, must be acknowledged originally derived from them.

Faults they have had, and will always have; for they are men, and subject to the common imperfections of mortal nature: but that, perhaps, less and fewer, than any other distinct sort of men: that as it is their duty, so it hath been their practice, to excel in virtue; and that they have commonly, in effect, made good St. Ambrose's words, *Debet præponderare vita sacerdotis, sicut præponderat gratia,*[b] were not difficult to demonstrate,

* μὴ στενάζοντες.
[a] Heb. xiii. 17.

[a] *Vide* Orig. contra Cels. lib. iii. p. 129; Mal. ii. 7.
[b] Epist. 82.

if seemly to make comparisons, or to insist upon so invidious a subject. Nor, were they greater than ever really they have been, or than ever malice could misrepresent them, should it be therefore equal, that the miscarriages of some should derogate from the reputation or prejudice the welfare of the whole order.

But to wave this plea. Consider their employment. Is there any office more laborious, more vexatious than theirs; accompanied with more wearisome toil, more solicitous care, more tedious attendance? They are deservedly called *watchmen*,[c] being constrained to stand always on the guard, to be always wakeful, attentive, and ready to warn the people of approaching dangers: and *shepherds* likewise, being forced to endure the various hardships of that uneasy life, the inconveniences of all weathers, the nipping frosts and sweltry heats, and all diversities of irksome travail; they must feed, they must guide, they must defend; they must seek the lost, and reduce the straying sheep. What assiduity of study, what earnest contention of soul are they obliged to use, in the continual instruction, exhortation, and reprehension of the people; in rectifying their judgments, satisfying their scruples, removing their prejudices, bearing their infirmities, and sympathizing with their afflictions? It is they that are engaged, with all their might, to withstand the prevailing encroachments of iniquity, to stop the progress of pernicious errors, to detect the false pretences of impostors, to confute the fallacies of sophisters, to repel the assaults of all adversaries to the truth; yea, if need be, to expose not only their dearest contents of life, but even their lives themselves, in the defence thereof.

Eusebius reports thus of Maximinus:[d] *Τοὺς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἄρχοντας μόνους, ὡς αἰτίους, τῆς κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον διδασκαλίας, ἀναιρεῖσθαι προσιάτιει. He commandeth that only the Governors of the Church*, (that is, the *bishops*) *should be slaughtered, as the authors of the growth and prevalence of evangelical doctrine.* Neither was it a singular practice of that bloody tyrant; but, as a thing of course, it constantly follows, that wherever righteousness and truth are violently impugned, the priests are sure to taste deepest of that bitter cup; that their goods be, in the first place, sequestered and spoiled, their reputation stained, their person misused, their lives sacrificed to the persecutor's outrageous malice.

Is it not reasonable, then, and equal that they who, for the service of God and benefit of the Church, undergo such difficulties, and are objected to so great hazards, should be sustained, should be refreshed, by proportionable encouragements? Is it not barbarous usage to expect so hard duties from them, to impose such heavy burdens on them, and yet to grudge any suitable comforts, any satisfactory rewards to them? Good King Hezekiah surely was not so minded, of whom it is said, *He commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the Priests and Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord:*[e] that is, that they might be heartened to study, to teach, to perform the duties required of them by the divine law. And St. Paul thus rationally expostulates in the priests' behalf: *Who ever goeth to war at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*[f] *Is it a great thing?* do you think much of it? If you do, you are unreasonable, you are unjust, you are ungrateful. And otherwhere he thus very emphatically admonishes: *We beseech you, brethren, to mind* them which labour among you, and preside† over you in the Lord, and that admonish you; and to esteem them more than exceedingly (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ) in love for their work* (or, *for their office*) *sake:*[g] (so ἔργον frequently signifies in such cases. And again: *Let the elders* (or *priests*, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι) *which rule well, be counted worthy of double honour* (or *of double recompense:*[h] so τιμὴ also imports.) Priests, as so, for their office sake, have honour and reward due to

[c] Heb. xiii. 17. [d] Lib. vi.

* εἰδέναι. † καὶ προϊσταμένους.

[e] 2 Chron. xxxi. 4.

[f] 1 Cor. ix. 7, 11; *Vide* Rom. xv. 27.

[g] 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. [h] 1 Tim. v. 17.

them; which, according to the good management of that office, are proportionably to be augmented and multiplied.

But farther yet, abstracting from both their personal worth and the merit of their service, consider their condition in this world, and see whether it doth not in equity challenge some reasonable provision to be made for them. Are they not, by the nature of their profession, secluded from all ordinary means of temporal advancement? Be not those usual inlets of wealth, the court, the camp, and the exchange, shut upon them, yea, barred against them, by those insuperable obstacles of law and custom? Can they grow rich by trade, or famous by feats of arms? May they plead for others? It is well if they be allowed to do it for themselves before equal judges. Yet are they not men, endued with human passions and resentments? Are they not citizens, partaking in the common interests of the weal public? Are they not sensible of the inconveniences, and capable of enjoying the benefits of this life? Are they not equally obliged, and would they not be glad, as well as others, to be in a capacity to requite courtesies, to help relations, to gratify friends, to relieve the poor, to express respectively their humanity and their gratitude? Skill they not to use the goods of fortune (or rather the gifts of Providence) with as much discretion, as much sobriety, as much honour, as others?—Compare things righteously, and let reason judge; let experience be examined; let those eternal monuments of their piety, their charity, their hospitality, declare and testify. Shall, lastly, the fruits of painful study, the improvement of hopeful parts, the flower of vigorous age and strength spent in the public service, tend only hither, to put a man into a state of struggling with extreme contempt and penury? If this be not, what, I pray you, is monstrous iniquity?

Since therefore it appears (upon so many several scores) reasonable, that Almighty God should undertake the protection and assert the honour of his priests, we may not only praise the goodness, but approve also the wisdom of this promise, and by the contemplation thereof strengthen our faith in reliance thereon. To which purpose one consideration more may very much conduce, and withal may provoke our gratitude to celebrate his truth and faithfulness in making good, as well as his goodness and wisdom in making, this promise; viz. the considering how continually hitherto God hath been pleased effectually to *clothe his priests with salvation*, to provide abundantly for their safety, their accommodation, their respect in this world, and to deliver them from the opposite inconveniences.

If we reflect our thoughts on the first ages of Christianity (not more dismal for suffering than glorious for piety), it is admirable to see how sincerely and passionately the Christian people did then love their priests and pastors; how liberally, out of their slender stock and the shipwrecks of their spoiled fortunes, they contributed to their maintenance; what exceeding veneration they bore them; with what incredible alacrity they submitted to the most severe disciplines enjoined by them; how willingly they followed them, though leading into the jaws of death and cruel torture: so that, although it was then necessary for the Christian priests to undergo the greatest hardships, according to the design of Christian religion (which was to be propagated, not by terror of power, nor by politic artifice, but by the invincible faith, resolution, and patience, of the professors and teachers thereof;) yet never more may they have seemed to thrive and prosper, than in that juncture of time, when they enjoyed the universal goodwill and applause of good people, when they unconstrainedly embraced affliction for righteousness' sake, and acquired thereby the certain fruition of a more excellent salvation.

But in the succeeding times, when Christianity, breaking out of the clouds of persecution, began to shine over all with brightest lustre; of the glorious and happy fruits of that illustrious triumph none did partake more fully than they who had sustained the hardest brunts of the foregoing conflict, and had been the principal causes of the success. Then the joyful acclamations of the faithful people resounded in the praise of their victorious champions: then did the emperors themselves, with arms outstretched and hearts enlarged with affection em-

brace the authors of their happy conversion: then all laws prejudicial to their welfare were rescinded, and new ones were substituted, abundantly providing for their security, honest livelihood, and due reverence; which in progress of time, not in the Roman empire only, but in all other nations (that afterwards did entertain Christianity), were nowise impaired, but were rather ampliated and fortified by the pious favour of princes: the barbarous Goths, and Vandals, and Lombards, being no sooner endued with any degree of civility, or any sense of religion, that possessed with a hearty reverence of their bishops and priests.

And ever since (which is not to be imputed, as some rashly, if not impiously aver, to the prevalence of Antichristian iniquity, but rather to the providence of Divine Benignity; ever since, I say), till the late commotions and alterations in Christendom, they have been the guardians of others' safety, not themselves deprived of protection; have abounded with wealth, rather than wanted sustenance; have been the objects of envy, more than of contempt. Princes have loved and cherished them, have relied upon their advice, and entrusted them with their highest concernments. Nobles have not been ashamed to yield them place. The sacerdotal robe hath been often dyed with purple; and the sons of mighty monarchs have not thought themselves degraded by entering into their order. And if, in some particular places (before or since those changes) their condition hath not been so high and plentiful, yet hath it been (almost ever) tolerable; the countenance of authority and the respect of the people being in good degree vouchsafed them. Even in those churches, which till this day groan under the oppression of infidel princes, the priests (by the free permission of those princes) retain their jurisdiction in a manner as great as ever; and withal enjoy a maintenance not altogether inconsiderable.

So favourable hitherto hath God been unto his priests, so faithful to his promise: which doth oblige us to thank him; which may encourage us to hope in him; which may arm us with confidence against the present ill-will of those that wish, and against the practices of those that design our ruin.

It is true, this promise is not affixed to all parts of time, to all particularities of place, to all determinate circumstances of things. The priests may, now and then, here and there, in this or that, suffer highly; they may be ejected, be plundered, be degraded, as experience hath showed us. But they may be also soon restored, repossessed, readvanced, and (I had almost said) revenged too, as the like experience doth assure us. It is not impossible, I confess, we may relapse into the same, or into a more calamitous estate; the obstinate disaffections of men threaten it, and our own miscarriages more dangerously: yet the most offensive of these (which many honest men dislike, and most men disclaim against) have been in as bitter terms complained of in almost the first ages. "*Inhiant possessionibus, prædia excolunt, auro incubant, quæstui per omnia student*," said a devout writer[1] of ecclesiastical history about 1300 years ago. And so much no man (without extreme uncharitableness and falsehood) can in so general terms impute to the present clergy: notwithstanding which, God did continue to vouchsafe his protection to them. They were sometimes (by the inundations of barbarous people), and we may again (by national concussions), be severely chastised for our faults: yet were not they, nor shall we be (at least every where and for ever) utterly rejected. God may *visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquity with stripes: nevertheless his loving-kindness will he not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. His covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.*[2] God may for a time hide his face from us; but he will not for ever turn his back upon us: the honour of the Priesthood may for a while be overclouded in some part of the world; but shall never totally be eclipsed, nor swallowed up in a perpetual night. While God continues his residence in Sion, and defends his Church against *the gates of Hell* and *powers of darkness*; while religion retains any sway in the hearts of men,

[1] Sulp. Sev. lib. i. c. 43.
[2] Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33, 34.

and truth possesses any room upon earth; the priests shall not be left destitute and naked, but everlastingly *be clothed with salvation*. Which that it may (to the glory of God and good of his Church) more surely come to pass, let us convert this promise into a prayer, and say with Solomon, *Now therefore arise, O Lord God, thou and the ark of thy strength; let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.*[k] Amen.

SERMON XIII.

NOT TO OFFEND IN WORD, AN EVIDENCE OF A HIGH PITCH OF VIRTUE.

JAMES iii. 2.—*If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man.*

THIS sentence stands in the head of a discourse concerning the tongue (that doubtful engine of good and evil), wherein how excellent benefits, and how grievous mischiefs, it, as rightly or perversely wielded, is apt to produce; how it is both a sweet instrument of all goodness, and a sharp weapon of all iniquity, is positively laid down, and by fit comparisons illustrated. But secluding all relation to the context, the words may well be considered singly by themselves: and as such they instruct us, asserting a certain truth; they direct us, implying a good duty. They assert that man to be perfect, who offends not in speech; and they consequently imply, that we should strive to avoid offending therein: for to *be perfect*, and to *go on to perfection*, are precepts, the observance whereof is incumbent on us.[a] We shall first briefly explain the assertion, and then declare its truth; afterwards we shall press somewhat couched in the duty.

To *offend*, originally signifies to *impinge*,* that is, to stumble, or hit dangerously upon somewhat lying cross our way, so as thereby to be cast down, or at least to be disordered in our posture, and stopt in our progress: whence it is well transferred to denote our being through any incident temptation brought into sin, whereby a man is thrown down, or bowed from his upright state, and interrupted from prosecuting a steady course of piety and virtue. By an usual and apposite manner of speaking, our tenor of life is called *a way*, our conversation *walking*, our actions *steps*, our observing good laws *uprightness*, our transgression of them *tripping*, *faltering*, *falling*.[b]

By *not offending in word*, we may easily, then, conceive to be understood such a constant restraint, and such a careful guidance of our tongue, that it doth not transgress the rules prescribed unto it by Divine law, or by good reason; that it thwarteth not the natural ends and proper uses for which it was framed, to which it is fitted; such as chiefly are promoting God's glory, our neighbour's benefit, and our own true welfare.

By *a perfect man*[c] is meant a person accomplished and complete in goodness, one of singular worth and integrity, a brave and excellent man, who, as to the continual tenor of his life, is free from all notorious defects, and heinous faults; like David, *fulfilling all God's will*, and *having respect to all God's commandments;* like Zachary and Elizabeth, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*[d] Thus was Noah, thus was Abraham, thus was Job perfect.[e] This is the notion of *perfection* in holy Scripture: not an absolute exemption from all blemish of soul, or blame in life; for such a perfection is inconsistent with the nature and state of man here, where none with modesty or with truth can say, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin;*[f] where every man must confess with Job, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; If I say, I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse.*[g] For; *There is not*, as the Preacher assures, *a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not;*[h] and, *In many things we offend all*, is our Apostle's assertion, immediately preceding my text; which words may serve to

* Εἴ τις ἐν λόγῳ οὐ πταίει.

[k] 2 Chron. vi. 41.

[a] Deut. xviii. 13; Luke vi. 40; Matt. v. 48; xix. 21; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Heb. vi. 1.

[b] Psal. xxxvii. 23, 24.

[c] James i. 4.

[d] Acts xiii. 22; Psal. cxix. 6; Luke i. 6.

[e] Gen. vi. 9; xvii. 1; Job i. 1.

[f] Prov. xx. 9.

[g] Job ix. 20.

[h] Eccles. vii. 20.

expound these. *In many things*, saith he, *we offend all;* that is, there is no man absolutely perfect: but *if any man offend not in word* (that is, if a man constantly govern his tongue well), *that man is perfect;* perfect in such a kind and degree as human frailty doth admit; he is eminently good; he may be reasonably presumed upright and blameless in all the course of his practice; *able* (as it follows) *to bridle the whole body*, that is, qualified to order all his actions justly and wisely. So that in effect the words import this: that a constant governance of our speech, according to duty and reason, is a high instance and a special argument of a thoroughly sincere and solid goodness.

The truth of which aphorism may from several considerations appear.

1. A good governance of speech is a strong evidence of a good mind; of a mind pure from vicious desires, calm from disorderly passions, void of dishonest intentions. For since speech is a child of thought, which the mind always travaileth and teemeth with, and which after its birth is wont in features to resemble its parent; since every man naturally is ambitious to propagate his conceits, and without a painful force cannot smother his resentments; since especially bad affections, like stum or poison, are impetuous and turgid, so agitating all the spirits, and so swelling the heart, that it cannot easily compose or contain them;[1] since a distempered constitution of mind, as of body, is wont to weaken the retentive faculty, and to force an evacuation of bad humours; since he that wanteth the principal wisdom of well-ordering his thoughts, and mastering his passions, can hardly be conceived so prudent, as long to refrain, or to regulate their dependence, speech: considering these things, I say, it is scarce possible, that he which commonly thinks ill, should constantly either be well silent, or speak well. To conceal fire, to check lightning, to confine a whirlwind, may perhaps be no less feasible, than to keep within due compass the exorbitant motions of the soul, wherein reason hath lost its command, so that *qua data porta*, where the next passage occurs, they should not rush forth, and vent themselves. A vain mind naturally will bubble forth or fly out in frothy expressions; wrath burning in the breast will flame out, or at least smoke through the mouth; rancorous imposthumes of spite and malice will at length discharge purulent matter; lust boiling within will soon foam out in lewd discourse. If the fountain itself is polluted, or infected, how can the streams be clear or wholesome? *How can ye, being evil, speak good things?* saith our Lord; *for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man*, addeth he, *out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things:*[2] ἐκβάλλει πονηρά, *he casteth forth ill things*, as a fountain doth its waters by a natural and necessary ebullition. It is true, that in some particular cases, or at some times, a foul heart may be disguised by fair words, or covered by demure reservedness: shame, or fear, or crafty design, may often repress the declaration of ill thoughts and purposes. But such fits of dissimulation cannot hold; men cannot abide quiet under so violent constraints; the intestine jars, or unkindly truces, between heart and tongue (those natural friends) cannot be perpetual, or very durable: no man can hold his breath long, or live without evaporating through his mouth those steams of passion which arise from flesh and blood. *My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,*[3] saith David, expressing the difficulty of obstructing the eruption of our affections into language. Hence it is, that speech is commonly judged the truest character of the mind, and the surest test of inward worth,* as that which discloseth the *hidden man of the heart*,[4] which unlocketh the closets of the breast, which draws the soul out of her dark recesses into open light and view, which rendereth our thoughts visible, and our intentions palpable. Hence *Loquere, ut te videam*, Speak, that I may see you, or know what kind of men you are, is a saying which all man, at first meeting,

[1] Ecclus. xix. 11,—A fool travaileth with a word, as a woman in labour of a child.

* Ἀνδρὸς χαρακτὴρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται.

[2] Matt. xii. 34. [3] Psal. xxxix. 3.

[4] 1 Pet. iii. 4.

do in their hearts direct one to another: neither commonly doth any man require more to ground a judgment upon concerning the worth or ability of another, than opportunity of hearing him to discourse for a competent time: yea, often before a man hath spoken ten words, his mind is caught, and a formal sentence is passed upon it. Such a strict affinity and connection do all men suppose between thoughts and words.

2. From hence, that the use of speech is itself a great ingredient into our practice, and hath a very general influence upon whatever we do, may be inferred, that whoever governeth it well, cannot also but well order his whole life. The extent of speech must needs be vast, since it is nearly commensurate to thought itself, which it ever closely traceth, widely ranging through all the immense variety of objects; so that men almost as often speak incogitantly, as they think silently. Speech is indeed the rudder that steereth human affairs, the spring that setteth the wheels of action on going; the hands work, the feet walk, all the members and all the senses act by its direction and impulse; yea, most thoughts are begotten, and most affections stirred up hereby; it is itself most of our employment, and what we do beside it, is however guided and moved by it. It is the profession and trade of many, it is the practice of all men to be in a manner continually talking. The chief and most considerable sort of men manage all their concernments merely by words; by them princes rule their subjects, generals command their armies, senators deliberate and debate about the great matters of state: by them advocates plead causes, and judges decide them; divines perform their offices, and minister their instructions; merchants strike up their bargains, and drive on all their traffic. Whatever, almost, great or small, is done in the court or in the hall, in the church or at the exchange, in the school or in the shop, it is the tongue alone that doeth it: it is the force of this little machine that turneth all the human world about. It is indeed the use of this strange organ which rendereth human life, beyond the simple life of other creatures, so exceedingly various and compound; which creates such a multiplicity of business, and which transacts it; while by it we communicate our secret conceptions, transfusing them into others; while therewith we instruct and advise one another; while we consult about what is to be done, contest about right, dispute about truth; while the whole business of conversation, of commerce, of government, and administration of justice, of learning, and of religion, is managed thereby; yea, while it stoppeth the gaps of time, and filleth up the wide intervals of business, our recreations and divertisements (the which do constitute a great portion of our life), mainly consisting therein, so that, in comparison thereof, the execution of what we determine and all other action do take up small room: and even all that usually dependeth upon foregoing speech, which persuadeth, or counselleth, or commandeth it. Whence the province of speech being so very large, it being so universally concerned, either immediately as the matter, or by consequence as the source of our actions, he that constantly governeth it well, may justly be esteemed to live very excellently.

3. To govern the tongue well is a matter of exceeding difficulty, requiring not only hearty goodness, but great judgment and art, together with much vigilance and circumspection; whence the doing it argues a high pitch of virtue. For since the tongue is a very loose and versatile engine, which the least breath of thought doth stir, and set on going any way, it cannot but need much attention to keep it either in a steady rest, or in a right motion. Since numberless swarms of things roving in the fancy, do thence incessantly obtrude themselves upon the tongue, very much application of mind and great judgment are requisite to select out of them those few which are good and fit, rejecting all that is bad, and improper to be spoken. Since continually temptations occur provoking or alluring to miscarriage in this kind (for beside internal propensions and commotions of soul, every object we behold, every company we are engaged in, every accident befalling us, doth suggest somewhat inviting thereto; the condition of our neighbour moving us, if high, to flatter—if low, to insult; our own fortune prompting, if prosperous, to boast—if cross, to mur-

mur; any action drawing from us, if it pleaseth us, fond admiration—if it disliketh, harsh censure: since, I say, we are thus at every turn obnoxious to speak amiss), it must be matter of huge skill and caution, of mighty industry and resolution to decline it. We for that purpose need to imitate that earnest and watchful care of the holy Psalmist, which he thus expresseth: *I have* (saith he) *purposed that my mouth shall not offend:* and, *I said* (saith he again) *I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*[m] And thus to maintain a constant guard over his heart and ways, thus in consequence thereof to curb and rule his speech well, must assuredly be the mark of a very good person. Especially considering, that,

4. Irregular speech hath commonly divers more advantages for it, and fewer checks upon it, than other bad practice hath. A man is apt, I mean, to speak ill with less dissatisfaction and regret from within; he may do it with less control and less hazard from without, than he can act ill. Bad actions are gross and bulky, taking up much time, and having much force spent on them, whence men easily observe and consider them in themselves and others; but ill words are subtile and transient, soon born, and as soon deceased; whence men rashly utter them without much heed before them, or much reflection after them. Bad actions have also usually visible effects immediately consequent on them: but words operate insensibly and at distance; so that men hardly discern what will follow them, or what they have effected. There are also frequent occasions of speaking ill upon presumption of secrecy, and thence of indisturbance and impunity; yea, doing so is often entertained with complacence, and encouraged with applause: the vilest abuses of speech (even blasphemy, treason, and slander themselves) may be safely whispered into ears which will receive them with pleasure and commendation. Bad language also in most cases is neither strictly prohibited, nor severely chastised by human laws, as bad action is. Whence ordinarily the guilt of this misbehaviour seems little or none; and persons much practising it, both in their own conceit, and in the opinion of others do often pass for innocent. Men, indeed, here will hardly discern any rule, or acknowledge any obligation: the tongue, they deem, is free, and any words may be dispensed with: it is sufficient if they abstain from doing gross wrong or mischief, they have a right and liberty to say any thing. *Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?*[n] so are men commonly prone to say, with those in the Psalm. Hence whosoever, notwithstanding such encouragements to offend herein, and so few restraints from it, governing his tongue according to rules of duty and reason, may justly be reputed a very good man. Farthermore,

5. Whereas most of the enormities, the mischiefs, and the troubles, whereby the souls of men are defiled, their minds discomposed, and their lives disquieted, are the fruits of ill-governed speech; it being that chiefly which perverteth justice, which soweth dissensions, which raiseth all bad passions and animosities, which embroileth the world in seditions and factions, by which men wrong and abuse, deceive and seduce, defame and disgrace one another, whereby consequently innumerable vexations and disturbances are created among men; he that by well governing his speech preserveth himself from the guilt, disengageth his mind and life from the inconveniences of all such evils (from the discreet and honest management thereof, enjoying both innocence and peace), must necessarily be, as a very wise and happy, so a very good and worthy person.

6. His tongue also so ruled cannot but produce very good fruits of honour to God, of benefit to our neighbour, of comfort to himself: it will be sweet and pleasant, it will be wholesome and useful; endearing conversation, cementing peaceful society, breeding and nourishing love, instructing and edifying, or cheering and comforting the hearers. His *tongue is health;* his *mouth is a well and a tree of life;* his *lips disperse knowledge;* he *shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth; every man shall kiss his*

[m] Psal. xvii. 3; xxxix. 1.

[n] Psal. xii. 4.

lips.° Such, as the Wise Man telleth us, are the effects of innocent, sober, and well-ordered discourse; the which do much commend their author, and declare the excellent virtue of that tree from which such fruits do grow.

7. Lastly, the observation how unusual this practice is, in any good degree, may strongly assure the excellency thereof. For the rarer, especially in morals, any good thing is, the more noble and worthy it is; that rarity arguing somewhat of peculiar difficulty in the attainment or the achievement thereof. Nothing is more obvious to common experience, than that persons, who in the rest of their demeanour and dealings appear blameless, yea, who in regard to other points of duty would seem nice and precise, are extremely peccant in this kind. We may see divers, otherwise much restraining and much denying themselves, who yet indulge themselves in a strange licentiousness in speaking whatever their humour or their passion dictates. Many, in other respects harmless (who would not for any thing smite or slay folks), we may observe with their tongue to commit horrible outrages upon any man that comes in their way. Frequently persons very punctual in their dealings are very unjust in their language, cheating and robbing their neighbour of his reputation by envious detraction and hard censure. They who abhor shedding a man's blood will yet, without any scruple or remorse, by calumnious tales and virulent reproaches, assassinate his credit, and murder his good name, although to him perhaps far more dear and precious than his life. Commonly such as are greatly staunch in other enjoyments of pleasure, are enormously intemperate in speaking, and very incontinent of their tongue: men in all other parts of morality rigorously sober, are often in this very wild and dissolute. Yea, not seldom we may observe, that even mighty pretenders of godliness, and zealous practisers of devotion, cannot forbear speaking things plainly repugnant to God's law, and very prejudicial to his honour. Thus it is observable to be now; and thus we may suppose that it always hath been. So of his time St. Hierome (or rather St. Paulinus, in his excellent Epistle to Celantia) testifies: *such a lust* (saith he concerning the ill governance of speech) *of this evil hath invaded the minds of men, that even those who have far receded from other vices, do yet fall into this, as into the last snare of the devil.** So it appears, that among all sorts of good practice, the strict governance of the tongue is least ordinary, and consequently that it is most admirable and excellent. And this is all I shall say for confirmation of the point asserted.

Now, then, as it is our duty to aim at perfection, or to endeavour the attainment of integrity in heart and life, so we should especially labour to govern our tongue, and guard it from offence. To which purpose it is requisite, that we should well understand and consider the nature of those several offences to which speech is liable, together with the special pravity, deformity, and inconvenience of each: for did we know and weigh them, we should not surely either like or dare to incur them.

The offences of speech are many and various in kind; so many as there be of thought and of action, unto which they do run parallel: accordingly they well may be distinguished from the difference of objects which they do especially respect. Whence, 1. some of them are committed against God, and confront piety; 2. others against our neighbour, and violate justice, or charity, or peace; 3. others against ourselves, infringing sobriety, discretion, or modesty; or, 4. some are of a more general and abstracted nature, rambling through all matters, and crossing all the heads of duty. It is true, that in most, or in all offences of speech, there is a complication of impiety, iniquity, and imprudence; for that by all sorts of ill speaking we sin against God, and break his commandment; we injure our neighbour, at least by contagion and bad example; we abuse ourselves, contracting guilt, and exposing ourselves to punishment: also the general vices of speech (unadvisedness and vanity) do constantly adhere to every bad word: yet commonly each evil speech hath a more

° Prov. xii. 18; x. 11; xv. 4; xii. 14; xiii. 2, 3; xv. 23; xxiv. 26.

* Tanta hujus mali libido mentes hominum invasit, ut etiam qui procul ab aliis vitiis recesserunt, in istud tamen, quasi in extremum diaboli laqueum, incidant. *Ad. Celant.*

direct and immediate aspect upon some one of those objects (God, our neighbour, or ourselves), and is peculiarly repugnant to one of those capital virtues (piety, charity, and sobriety) unto which all our duty is reduced. Now, according to this distinction, I should, if time would give leave, describe and dissuade particularly all these sorts of offence: but (since I must be respectful to patience, and careful myself not to offend in speech) I shall confine the rest of my present Discourse to the first sort, the offences against piety; and even of them I shall (waving the rest) only touch two or three, insinuating some reasons why we should eschew them. These are—

1. Speaking blasphemously against God, or reproachfully concerning religion, or to the disgrace of piety, with intent to subvert men's faith in God, or to impair their reverence of him.[p] There hath been a race of men (and would to God that race were not even till now continued), concerning whom the Psalmist said, *They speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens;*[q] who, like the proud Sennacherib, *lift up their eyes, and exalt their voice against the Holy One of Israel;* who, with the profane Antiochus, *speak marvellous things against the God of Gods.*[r] This of all impieties is the most prodigiously gigantic, the most signal practice of enmity towards God, and downright waging of war against heaven. Of all *weapons formed against God*,[s] the tongue most notoriously doth impugn him; for we cannot reach heaven with our hands, or immediately assault God by our actions: other ill practice indeed obliquely, or by consequence, dishonoureth God, and defameth goodness; but profane discourse is directly levelled at them, and doth immediately touch them, as its formal objects. Now doing thus argueth an extremity both of folly and naughtiness: for he that doeth it, either believeth the existence of God, and the truth of religion; or he distrusts them. If he doth believe them, what a desperate madness is it in him, advisedly to invite certain mischief to his home, and pull down heaviest vengeance on his own head, by opposing the irresistible power, and provoking the inflexible justice of God! What an abominable villainy and baseness is it thus to abuse God's immense goodness and mercy, offering such despite to the Author of his being, and free Donor of all the good he enjoys! What a monstrous conspiracy it is of stupidity and perverseness in him, thus wilfully to defy his own welfare, to forfeit all capacity of happiness; to precipitate and plunge himself into a double hell, that of bitter remorse here, that of endless pain hereafter! But if he that reproacheth God and religion be supposed distrustful of their being and reality, neither so is he excusable from like degrees of folly and pravity: for, beside the wild extravagance of such disbelief, against legions of cogent arguments and pregnant testimonies, against all the voice of nature and faith of history, against the settled judgment of wise and sober persons, who have studied and considered the point, against the current tradition of all ages, and general consent of mankind; all which to withstand, no less demonstrateth high indiscretion than arrogance; beside also the palpable silliness which he displays, in causelessly (or for no other cause than soothing a fantastic humour) drawing upon himself the anger and hatred of all men who are concerned for the interests of their religion, thrusting himself into great dangers and mischiefs thence imminent to him both from private zeal and public law; beside, I say, these evident follies, there is an insufferable insolence and horrible malice apparent in this practice; for it is no less than the height of insolence, thus to affront mankind in matters of highest consideration, and deepest resentment with it; not only thwarting its common notions, but vilifying the chief objects of its highest respect and affection, of its main care and concernment; so making the fiercest invasion that can be on its credit, and charging it with greatest fondness. Who can endure that He, whom he apprehends to be his grand Parent, his best Friend and Benefactor, his great Patron and Sovereign, should in downright terms be defamed or disparaged? Who can patiently bear that, wherein he placeth his utmost hopes and supreme felicity, to

[p] (Psal. lxxviii. 19; Num. xxi. 5; Job xxxiv. 37.)
[q] Psal. lxxiii. 8, 9.
[r] Isa. xxxvii. 23; 2 Chron. xxxii. 19; Dan. xi. 36.
[s] Isa. liv. 17.

be expressly slighted or scorned? Who can take the offering to do this, otherwise than for a most injurious reflection upon his judgment and his practice? If he cannot believe in God, he may let them alone who do: if he will not practise religion, he may forbear to persecute it. He cannot pretend any zeal; it is therefore only pride that moves him to disturb us. So may every man, with all the reason in the world, complain against the profane talker. Seeing also it is most evident, that hearty reverence of God, and a conscientious regard to religion, do produce great benefits to mankind, being indeed the main supports of common honesty and sobriety, the sole curbs, effectually restraining men from unjust fraud and violence, from brutish lusts and passions; since apparently religion prescribeth the best rules, and imposeth the strongest engagements to the performance of those actions, whereby not only men's private welfare is promoted, and ordinary conversation is sweetened, and common life is adorned, but also whereby public order and peace are maintained; since, as Cicero with good reason judged, *piety being removed, it is probable that justice itself* (of all virtues the best guarded and fortified by human power) *could not subsist, no faith could be secured, no society could be preserved among men*;* it being manifestly vain to fancy, that assuredly without religious conscience any one will be a good subject, a true friend, or an honest man; or that any other consideration can induce men to prefer duty to their prince, the prosperity of their country, fidelity toward their friends or neighbours, before their own present interests and pleasure: since, I say, the credit of religion is so very beneficial and useful to mankind, it is plain that he must be exceedingly spiteful and malicious, who shall by profane discourse endeavour to supplant or shake it. He that speaketh against God's providence hath assuredly a pique at goodness, and would not have it predominant in the hearts of men. He that disparages religion doth certainly take his aim against virtue, and would not have it practised in the world: his meaning plainly is, to effect, if he can, that men should live like beasts in foul impurities, or like fiends in mischievous iniquities. Such an one, therefore, is not to be taken as a simple embracer of error, but as a spiteful designer against common good. For indeed, were any man assured (as none can upon so much as probable grounds think it) that religion had been only devised by men, as a supplemental aid to reason and force (drawing them, whom the one could not persuade, nor the other compel, to the practice of things conducible to the public weal;*) that it were merely an implement of policy, or a knack to make people loyal to their prince, upright in their dealings, sober in their conversations, moderate in their passions, virtuous in all their doings; it were yet a most barbarous naughtiness and inhumanity in him to essay the overthrow thereof, with the defeating so excellent purposes: he that should attempt it, justly would deserve to be reputed an enemy to the welfare of mankind, to be treated as a pestilent disturber of the world.

II. Another like offence against piety is, to speak loosely and wantonly about holy things (things nearly related to God or to religion), to make such things the matter of sport and mockery, to play and trifle with them. But of this I shall have occasion to speak in another Discourse.

III. Another grand offence against piety is, rash and vain swearing in common discourse; an offence which now strangely reigns and rages in the world, passing about in a specious garb, and under glorious titles, as a genteel and graceful quality, a mark of fine breeding, and a point of high gallantry. Who, forsooth, now is the brave spark and complete gentleman, but he that hath the skill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a skill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every sentence with an oath or a curse; making bold at every turn to salute God, fetching him down from heaven to avouch any idle prattle, to second any giddy passion, to concern himself in any trivial affair of his; yea, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and destroy him! But somewhat to repress these

* Haud scio an, pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus justitia tollatur.—*Cic.*

* Ut quos ratio non posset, eos ad officium religio duceret.—*Cic.*

fond conceits and vile practices, let us, I pray, consider—

1. That swearing thus is most expressly and strictly prohibited to us. *I say unto you, Swear not at all: but let your conversation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil:*[t] so our Lord forbids it. *But above all things, my brethren, swear not—lest you enter into condemnation:*[u] so doth St. James warn against it. And is it not then prodigious, that in Christendom any man should affect to break laws so plain and so severe; that it should pass here not only for a tolerable, but even for a commendable practice, to violate so manifest and so important a duty; that so directly to thwart our Lord himself should be a thing not in use only, but in credit and request among Christians? What more palpable affront could be offered to our religion, and to all that is sacred among us? For what respect or force can we imagine reserved to religion, while a practice so indisputably opposite thereto, in a high degree, is so current and prevalent?

2. Again, according to the very nature and reason of things, it is evidently an intolerable profaneness, thus unadvisedly to make addresses and appeals to God, invoking his testimony, and demanding his judgment about trifles; far more such, than it were a high presumption and encroachment upon the majesty of a prince, on every petty occasion to break into his presence, and to assail his ears, dragging him to hear and determine concerning it. Whence the very light of nature condemns this practice, and even heathens have loudly declared against it, as derogatory to the reverence of the duty, and unsuitable to the gravity of a worthy man.

3. Swearing indeed is by our holy Oracles worthily represented to us as an especial piece of worship and devotion toward God: wherein, duly performed, we piously acknowledge his chief attributes and singular prerogatives (his being everywhere present, and conscious of all we say or do; his goodness and fidelity, in favouring truth and protecting right; his justice, in rewarding veracity and equity, in avenging falsehood and iniquity; his being the supreme Lord of all persons, and last judge in all causes; to signify and avow these things to God's glory, swearing was instituted, and naturally serveth:) wherefore, as all other acts of devotion, so this grand one especially should never be performed without all serious consideration and humble reverence; the cause should be certainly just and true, the matter worthy and weighty, the manner grave and solemn, the mind framed to earnest attention, and furnished with devout affections. Those conditions are always carefully to be observed, which the Prophet intimates when he chargeth thus: *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.*[v] It is therefore horrible mockery and profanation of a most sacred ordinance, when men presume to use it without any care or consideration, without any respect or awe, upon any slight or vain occasion.

4. The doing so is also very prejudicial to human society; for the decision of right, the security of government, and the preservation of peace, do much depend upon an awful regard to oaths; and, therefore, upon their being only used in due manner and season: the same do greatly suffer by the contempt or disregard of them, and consequently by their common and careless use. They are the surest bonds by which the consciences of men are tied to the attestation of truth and observance of faith; the which as by rare and reverent use they are kept firm and fast, so by frequent and negligent application of them (by their prostitution to every light and toyish matter) they are quite dissolved, or much slackened. Whence the public seems much concerned that this enormity should be retrenched. For if oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify? If men are wont to dally with swearing everywhere, can they be expected to be strict and serious therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard the testimony of God, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when as everywhere continually (upon any, upon no occasion) they dare to confront and contemn them?

5. This way of swearing is also a very uncivil and unmannerly practice. It is not only a gross rudeness toward

[t] Matt. v. 34, 37. [u] James v. 12. [v] Jer. iv. 2.

the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of God, and loathe such abuses thereof; not only an insolent defiance to the common profession and law of our country, which disallows and condemns it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society, if, at least, there be one sober person therein: for to any such person (who retains a sense of goodness, or is anywise concerned for God's honour), no language or behaviour can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate the ears or fret the heart of such an one, than this kind of talk: to give him the lie were a compliment, to spit in his face were an obligation in comparison thereto. Wherefore it is a wonder that any person having in him a spark of ingenuity, or at all pretending to good manners, should find in his heart or deign to use it.

6. This practice also much derogateth from the credit of him that useth it, rendering the truth of whatever he says in reason and justice suspected. For he that is so void of conscience as to swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly? He that is so loose in one such point of obedience to God and reason, why should we conceive him in regard to another?

7. It can be surely no wrong to distrust him, since he implies himself not to be, even in his own opinion, a credible person; since he judges not his own bare affirmation to deserve belief. For why, if he takes his word to be competently good, doth he back it with such asseveration?* why unprovoked calls he God to witness, if he thinks his own honesty sufficient to assure the truth of what he says? An honest man, methinks, should scorn thus to invalidate his own credit, or to detract from the authority of his word, which should stand firm upon itself, and not want an oath to support it.

8. To excuse this, the swearer must be forced to confess another ugly fault in speaking, that is impertinence, or using of waste and insignificant words; to be charged wherewith he is indeed, however, unavoidably liable. For oaths, as they pass commonly, are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing else but encumber and deform it; they embellish discourse just as a wen or a scab does beautify a face, as a spot or a patch do adorn a garment. For to what purpose, I pray, is God's name haled into our idle talk? Why should we so often mention him, when we never mean anything about him? Into every sentence to foist a dog or a horse, would altogether be as proper and pertinent. These superfluous words signify nothing, but that the speaker little skilleth the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to prate anything without wit or judgment;* that his fancy is very beggarly, and craves the aid of any impertinency to relieve it. One would think that a man of sense should grutch to lend his ears, or incline his attention, to such putrid stuff; that without nauseating he should not endure to see men lavish time, and squander breath so frivolously.

9. In fine, this offence is particularly most inexcusable, in that it scarce hath any temptation to it, or bringeth with it any advantage; so that it is unaccountable what (beside mere vanity or perverseness), should dispose men thereto. It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour: for the sound of it is not very melodious, nor surely was any man ever preferred for it, or got an estate thereby; it rather, to any good ear, maketh a horrid and jarring noise; it rather produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. Wherefore, of all dealers in sin, the swearer is apparently the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the Prophet, *selleth his soul for nothing*.[w] An epicure hath some reason, and an extortioner is a man of wisdom if compared to him; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some gain here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter. But he offends heaven, and abandons happiness, he knows not why, nor for what; a fond humour possesses him, he inconsiderately follows a herd of fops, he affects to play the ape; that is all he can say for himself. Let me be pardoned, if just indignation against a wickedness so contemptible, so heinous, and so senseless, and withal so notorious, and so rife among us, doth extort from me language somewhat tart and vehement.

* Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes.—*Hier.*

* Πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου.—Hier.

[w] Isa. lii. 3.

If men would then but a little consider things, surely this scurvy fashion would be soon discarded, much fitter for the scum of the people than for the flower of the gentry; yea rather, much below any man endued with a scrap of reason, not to say with a grain of religion. Could we bethink ourselves, certainly modest, sober, and pertinent discourse, would appear far more generous and manly, than such wild hectoring God Almighty, such rude insulting over the received laws, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors (that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which first advanced their families, and severed them from the vulgar), this degenerate wantonness and dirtiness of speech would return to the dunghill, or rather (which God grant) would be quite banished from the world.

Finally, as to this whole point, about not offending in our speech against piety, we should consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to serve and glorify our Maker (it being withal the greatest perfection of our nature, and the noblest privilege thereof so to do;) so especially our tongue and speaking faculty were given us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to express our love and gratitude toward him, to celebrate his praises, to acknowledge his benefits, to promote his honour and service. This consequently is the most proper and worthy use thereof; from this it becomes in effect what the Psalmist so often terms it, our *glory*, and the best member we have; as that whereby we far excel all creatures here below; that whereby we consort with the blessed angels above, in distinct utterance of praise to our Creator.[x] Wherefore applying it to any impious discourse (tending anywise to the dishonour of God, or disparagement of religion), is a most unnatural abuse thereof, and a vile ingratitude toward him that gave it to us. From which, and from all other offences, God in his mercy preserve us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; unto whom for ever, with heart and tongue, let us strive to render all glory and praise. *Amen.*

[x] Psal. xvi. 9; xxx. 12; lvii. 8; cviii. 1.

SERMON XIV.

AGAINST FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING.

EPHES. v. 4.—*Nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.*

MORAL and political aphorisms are seldom couched in such terms, that they should be taken as they sound precisely, or according to the widest extent of signification; but do commonly need exposition, and admit exception: otherwise frequently they would not only clash with reason and experience, but interfere, thwart, and supplant one another. The best masters of such wisdom are wont to interdict things, apt by unseasonable or excessive use to be perverted in general forms of speech, leaving the restrictions, which the case may require or bear, to be made by the hearer's or interpreter's discretion; whence many seemingly formal prohibitions are to be received only as sober cautions. This observation may be particularly supposed applicable to this precept of St. Paul, which seemeth universally to forbid a practice commended (in some cases and degrees) by philosophers as virtuous, not disallowed by reason, commonly affected by men, often used by wise and good persons; from which, consequently, if our religion did wholly debar us, it would seem chargeable with somewhat too uncouth austerity and sourness: from imputations of which kind, as in its temper and frame it is really most free (it never quenching natural light, or cancelling the dictates of sound reason, but confirming and improving them;*) so it carefully declineth them, enjoining us, that *if there be any things προσφιλῆ* (*lovely*, or grateful to men), *any things εὔφημα* (*of good report* and repute), *and if there be any virtue and any praise* (any thing in the common apprehensions of men held worthy and laudable), we should *mind those things*,[a] that is, should yield them a regard answerable to the esteem they carry among rational and sober persons.

Whence it may seem requisite so to interpret and determine St. Paul's mean-

* Οἱ μήτ' εἰπόντες μηθὲν γελοῖον, τοῖς τε λέγουσι δυσχεραίνοντες, ἄγριοι καὶ σκληροὶ δοκοῦσιν εἶναι.—Arist. Eth. iv. 8.

[a] Phil. iv. 8.

ing here concerning εὐτραπελία (that is, facetious speech or raillery, by our translators rendered *jesting*), that he may consist with himself, and be reconciled to Aristotle, who placeth this practice in the rank of virtues; or that religion and reason may well accord in the case; supposing, that if there be any kind of facetiousness innocent and reasonable, conformable to good manners (regulated by common sense, and consistent with the tenor of Christian duty, that is, not transgressing the bounds of piety, charity, and sobriety), St. Paul did not intend to discountenance or prohibit that kind.

For thus expounding and limiting his intent, we have some warrant from himself, some fair intimations in the words here. For first, what sort of facetious speech he aimeth at, he doth imply by the fellow he coupleth therewith; μωρολογία (saith he) ἢ εὐτραπελία, *foolish talking*, or *facetiousness:* such facetiousness, therefore, he toucheth as doth include folly, in the matter or manner thereof. Then he farther determineth it, by adjoining a peculiar quality thereof, unprofitableness or impertinency; τὰ μὴ ἀνήκοντα, *which are not pertinent*, or conducible to any good purpose: whence may be collected, that it is a frivolous and idle sort of facetiousness which he condemneth.

But, however, manifest it is that some kind thereof he doth earnestly forbid: whence, in order to the guidance of our practice, it is needful to distinguish the kinds, severing that which is allowable from that which is unlawful; that so we may be satisfied in the case, and not on the one hand ignorantly transgress our duty, nor on the other trouble ourselves with scruples, others with censures, upon the use of warrantable liberty therein.

And such a resolution seemeth indeed especially needful in this our age (this pleasant and jocular age), which is so infinitely addicted to this sort of speaking, that it scarce doth affect or prize any thing near so much; all reputation appearing now to veil and stoop to that of being a wit: to be learned, to be wise, to be good, are nothing in comparison thereto; even to be noble and rich, are inferior things, and afford no such glory. Many at least, to purchase this glory, to be deemed considerable in this faculty, and enrolled among the wits, do not only *make shipwreck of conscience*, abandon virtue, and forfeit all pretences to wisdom; but neglect their estates, and prostitute their honour: so to the private damage of many particular persons, and with no small prejudice to the public, are our times possessed and transported with this humour. To repress the excess and extravagance whereof, nothing in way of discourse can serve better, than a plain declaration when and how such a practice is allowable or tolerable; when it is wicked and vain, unworthy of a man endued with reason, and pretending to honesty or honour.

This I shall in some measure endeavour to perform.

But first it may be demanded, what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply, as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, *It is that which we all see and know:* any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by description. It is indeed a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale: sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression: sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude:* sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting, or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of

* Eadem quæ, si imprudentibus excidunt, stulta sunt, si simulamus, venusta creduntur.—*Quint.* vi. 3.

persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange; sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose: often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by), which by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto.* It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar: it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable; a notable skill, that he can dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before him; together with a likely briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination. (When in Aristotle[b] such persons are termed ἐπιδέξιοι, *dexterous* men; and εὐτρόποι, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves.)† It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness or semblance of difficulty (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure;) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts; by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit; by provoking to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation or complaisance; and by seasoning matters, otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual and thence grateful tang.

But saying no more concerning what it is, and leaving it to your imagination and experience to supply the defect of such explication, I shall address myself to show, first, when and how such a manner of speaking may be allowed; then, in what matters and ways it should be condemned.

I. Such facetiousness is not absolutely unreasonable or unlawful, which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation:* (harmless, I say, that is, not entrenching upon piety, not infringing charity or justice, not disturbing peace.) For Christianity is not so tetrical, so harsh, so envious, as to bar us continually from innocent, much less from wholesome and useful pleasure, such as human life doth need or require. And if jocular discourse may serve to good purposes of this kind; if it may be apt to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our irksome cares, to whet our blunted industry, to recreate our minds, being tired and cloyed with graver occupations;† if it may breed alacrity, or maintain good humour among us; if it may conduce to sweeten conversation and endear society; then is it not inconvenient or unprofitable. If for those ends we may use other recreations, employing on them our ears and eyes, our hands and feet, our other instruments of sense and motion; why may we not as well to them accommodate our organs of speech and interior sense? Why should those games which excite our wits and fancies be less reasonable than those whereby our grosser parts and faculties are exercised? Yea, why are not those more reasonable, since they are performed in a manly way, and have in them a smack of reason; seeing also they may be so managed, as not only to divert and please, but to improve and profit the mind, rousing and quickening it, yea, sometimes enlightening and instructing it, by good sense conveyed in jocular expression?‡

It would surely be hard, that we should be tied ever to knit the brow and squeeze the brain (to be always sadly dumpish, or seriously pensive), that all divertisement of mirth and pleasantness should

* Et hercle omnis salse dicendi ratio in eo est, ut aliter quam est rectum verumque dicatur.—*Quint.* vi 3.

† Εὐτράπελος λέγεται ὁ ποικίλος, ὁ παντοδαπὸς, ὁ ἄσατος, ὁ εὔκολος, ὁ πάντα γινόμενος.—Chrys. in Eph. Or. 17.

[b] Eth. iv. 8.

* Δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ ἀνάπαυσις καὶ ἡ παιδιὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ εἶναι ἀναγκαίον.—Arist. Eth. iv. 8.

† Danda est remissio animis; meliores acrioresque requieti surgent, &c.—*Sen. de Tranq.* 15.

‡ — ridentem dicere verum Quid vetat?

be shut out of conversation: and how can we better relieve our minds, or relax our thoughts, how can we be more ingeniously cheerful, in what more kindly way can we exhilarate ourselves and others, than by thus *sacrificing to the graces*,* as the ancients called it? Are not some persons always, and all persons sometimes, uncapable otherwise to divert themselves, than by such discourse? Shall we, I say, have no recreation? or must our recreations be ever clownish or childish, consisting merely in rustical efforts, or in petty sleights of bodily strength and activity? Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk like philosophers, assigning dry reasons for every thing, and dropping grave sentences upon all occasions, would it not much deaden human life, and make ordinary conversation exceedingly to languish? Facetiousness, therefore, in such cases, and to such purposes, may be allowable.

2. Facetiousness is allowable, when it is the most proper instrument of exposing things apparently base and vile to due contempt. It is many times expedient, that things really ridiculous should appear such, that they may be sufficiently loathed and shunned; and to render them such, is the part of a facetious wit, and usually can only be compassed thereby. When to impugn them with downright reason, or to check them by serious discourse, would signify nothing; then representing them in a shape strangely ugly to the fancy, and thereby raising derision at them, may effectually discountenance them. Thus did the prophet Elias expose the wicked superstition of those who worshipped Baal: *Elias* (saith the text) *mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.*[c] By which one pregnant instance it appeareth, that reasoning pleasantly-abusive in some cases may be useful. The Holy Scripture doth not indeed use it frequently (it not suiting the Divine simplicity and stately gravity thereof to do so;) yet its condescension thereto at any time sufficiently doth authorise a cautious use thereof. When sarcastical twitches are needful to pierce the thick skins of men, to correct their lethargic stupidity, to rouse them out of their drowsy negligence; then may they well be applied: when plain declarations will not enlighten people, to discern the truth and weight of things, and blunt arguments will not penetrate, to convince or persuade them to their duty; then doth reason freely resign its place to wit, allowing it to undertake its work of instruction and reproof.

3. Facetious discourse particularly may be commodious for reproving some vices and reclaiming some persons (as salt for cleansing and curing some sores.) It commonly procureth a more easy access to the ears of men, and worketh a stronger impression on their hearts, than other discourse could do. Many who will not stand a direct reproof, and cannot abide to be plainly admonished of their fault, will yet endure to be pleasantly rubbed, and will patiently bear a jocund wipe; though they abominate all language purely bitter or sour, yet they can relish discourse having in it a pleasant tartness: you must not chide them as their master, but you may gibe with them as their companion; if you do that, they will take you for pragmatical and haughty; this they may interpret friendship and freedom. Most men are of that temper; and particularly the genius of divers persons, whose opinions and practices we should strive to correct, doth require not a grave and severe, but a free and merry way of treating them. For what can be more unsuitable and unpromising, than to seem serious with those who are not so themselves, or demure with the scornful? If we design either to please or vex them into better manners, we must be as sportful in a manner, or as contemptuous as themselves. If we mean to be heard by them, we must talk in their own fashion, with humour and jollity: if we will instruct them, we must withal somewhat divert them: we must seem to play with them, if we think to convey any sober thoughts into them. They scorn to be formally advised or taught; but they may perhaps be slyly laughed and lured into a better mind. If by such complaisance we can inveigle those dotterels to hearken to us, we may induce them to consider farther,

* Οὕτε ταῖς χάρισι· ita Plato Xenocratem morosiorem monuit.

[c] 1 Kings xviii. 27.

and give reason some competent scope, some fair play with them. Good reason may be apparelled in the garb of wit, and therein will securely pass, whither in its native homeliness it could never arrive: and being come thither, it with especial advantage may impress good advice; making an offender more clearly to see, and more deeply to feel his miscarriage; being represented to his fancy in a strain somewhat rare and remarkable, yet not so fierce and frightful. The severity of reproof is tempered, and the reprover's anger disguised thereby. The guilty person cannot but observe, that he who thus reprehends him is not disturbed or out of humour, and that he rather pitieth than hateth him; which breedeth a veneration to him, and imparteth no small efficacy to his wholesome suggestions. Such a reprehension, while it forceth a smile without, doth work remorse within; while it seemeth to tickle the ear, doth sting the heart. In fine, many whose foreheads are brazed and hearts steeled against all blame, are yet not of proof against derision; divers, who never will be reasoned, may be rallied into better order: in which cases raillery, as an instrument of so important good, as a servant of the best charity, may be allowed.

4. Some errors likewise in this way may be most properly and most successfully confuted; such as deserve not, and hardly can bear a serious and solid confutation. He that will contest things apparently decided by sense and experience, or who disavows clear principles of reason, approved by general consent, and the common sense of men, what other hopeful way is there of proceeding with him, than pleasantly to explode his conceits? To dispute seriously with him were trifling; to trifle with him is the proper course: since he rejecteth the grounds of reasoning, it is vain to be in earnest: what then remains but to jest with him? To deal seriously, were to yield too much respect to such a baffler, and too much weight to his fancies; to raise the man too high in his courage and conceit; to make his pretences seem worthy the considering and canvassing. Briefly, perverse obstinacy is more easily quelled, petulant impudence is sooner dashed, sophistical captiousness is more safely eluded, sceptical wantonness is more surely confounded in this, than in the simple way of discourse.

5. This way is also commonly the best way of defence against unjust reproach and obloquy. To yield to a slanderous reviler a serious reply, or to make a formal plea against his charge, doth seem to imply, that we much consider or deeply resent it; whereas by pleasant reflection on it we signify, the matter only deserves contempt, and that we take ourselves unconcerned therein. So easily without care or trouble may the brunts of malice be declined or repelled.

6. This way may be allowed in way of counterbalancing and in compliance to the fashion of others. It would be a disadvantage unto truth and virtue, if their defenders were barred from the use of this weapon; since it is that especially whereby the patrons of error and vice do maintain and propagate them. They being destitute of good reason, do usually recommend their absurd and pestilent notions by a pleasantness of conceit and expression, bewitching the fancies of shallow hearers, and inveigling heedless persons to a liking of them: and if, for reclaiming such people, the folly of those seducers may in like manner be displayed as ridiculous and odious, why should that advantage be refused? It is wit that wageth the war against reason, against virtue, against religion; wit alone it is that perverteth so many, and so greatly corrupteth the world: it may therefore be needful, in our warfare for those dearest concerns, to sort the manner of our fighting with that of our adversaries, and with the same kind of arms to protect goodness whereby they do assail it. If wit may happily serve under the banner of truth and virtue, we may impress it for that service; and good it were to rescue so worthy a faculty from so vile abuse. It is the right of reason and piety to command that and all other endowments; folly and impiety do only usurp them: just and fit therefore it is, to wrest them out of so bad hands to revoke them to their right use and duty.

It doth especially seem requisite to do it in this age, wherein plain reason is deemed a dull and heavy thing. When the mental appetite of men is become like the corporeal, and cannot relish any

food without some piquant sauce, so that people will rather starve than live on solid fare; when substantial and sound discourse findeth small attention or acceptance; in such a time, he that can, may in complaisance, and for fashion's sake, vouchsafe to be facetious: an ingenious vein, coupled with an honest mind, may be a good talent: he shall employ wit commendably, who by it can further the interests of goodness, alluring men first to listen, then inducing them to consent unto its wholesome dictates and precepts.

Since men are so irreclaimably disposed to mirth and laughter, it may be well to set them in the right pin, to divert their humor into the proper channel, that they may please themselves in deriding things which deserve it, ceasing to laugh at that which requireth reverence or horror.

It may also be expedient to put the world out of conceit that all sober and good men are a sort of such lumpish or sour people, that they can utter nothing but flat and drowsy stuff; by showing them that such persons, when they see cause, in condescension, can be as brisk and smart as themselves; when they please, can speak pleasantly and wittily as well as gravely and judiciously. This way at least, in respect to the various palates of men, may for variety's sake be sometimes attempted, when other means do fail: when many strict and subtile arguings, many zealous declamations, many wholesome serious discourses have been spent, without effecting the extirpation of bad principles, or conversion of those who abet them; this course may be tried, and some perhaps may be reclaimed thereby.

7. Farthermore, the warrantableness of this practice in some cases many be inferred from a parity of reason in this manner: If it be lawful (as by the best authorities it plainly doth appear to be), in using rhetorical schemes, poetical strains, involutions of sense in allegories, fables, parables, and riddles, to discoast from the plain and simple way of speech; why may not facetiousness, issuing from the same principles, directed to the same ends, serving to like purposes, be likewise used blamelessly? If those exorbitancies of speech may be accommodated to instil good doctrine into the head, to excite good passions in the heart, to illustrate and adorn the truth, in a delightful and taking way; and facetious discourse be sometime notoriously conducible to the same ends; why, they being retained, should it be rejected? especially considering how difficult often it may be, to distinguish those forms of discourse from this, or exactly to define the limits which sever rhetoric and raillery. Some elegant figures and tropes of rhetoric (biting sarcasms, sly ironies, strong metaphors, lofty hyperboles, paronomasies, oxymorons, and the like, frequently used by the best speakers, and not seldom even by sacred writers) do lie very near upon the confines of jocularity, and are not easily differenced from those sallies of wit, wherein the lepid way doth consist: so that were this wholly culpable, it would be matter of scruple whether one hath committed a fault or no, when he meant only to play the orator or the poet; and hard surely it would be to find a judge who could precisely set out the difference between a jest and a flourish.

8. I shall only add, that of old even the sagest and gravest persons (persons of most rigid and severe virtue) did much affect this kind of discourse, and did apply it to noble purposes. The great introducer of moral wisdom among the Pagans did practise it so much (by it repressing the windy pride and fallacious vanity of sophisters in his time), that he thereby got the name of ὁ εἴρων, *the droll;* and the rest of those who pursued his design, do by numberless stories and apophthegms recorded of them, appear well skilled, and much delighted in this way. Many great princes (as Augustus Cæsar for one, many of whose jests are extant in Macrobius), many grave statesmen (as Cicero[d] particularly, who composed several books of jests), many famous captains (as Fabius, M. Cato the Censor, Scipio Africanus, Epaminondas, Themistocles, Phocion, and many others, whose witty sayings, together with their martial exploits, are reported by historians), have pleased themselves herein, and made it a condiment of their weighty businesses. So that practising thus, within certain rule and

[d] Cic. de Orat. ii.

compass, we cannot err without great patterns, and mighty patrons.*

9. In fine, since it cannot be shown that such a sportfulness of wit and fancy doth contain an intrinsic and inseparable turpitude; since it may be so cleanly, handsomely, and innocently used, as not to defile or discompose the mind of the speaker, not to wrong or harm the hearer, not to derogate from any worthy subject of discourse, not to infringe decency, to disturb peace, to violate any of the grand duties incumbent on us (piety, charity, justice, sobriety), but rather sometimes may yield advantage in those respects;† it cannot well absolutely and universally be condemned: and when not used upon improper matter, in an unfit manner, with excessive measure, at undue season, to evil purpose, it may be allowed. It is bad objects, or bad adjuncts, which do spoil its indifference and innocence:‡ it is the abuse thereof, to which (as all pleasant things are dangerous, and apt to degenerate into baits of intemperance and excess) it is very liable, that corrupteth it; and seemeth to be the ground, why in so general terms it is prohibited by the Apostle. Which prohibition to what cases, or what sorts of jesting it extendeth, we come now to declare.

II. 1. All profane jesting, all speaking loosely and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to God and religion) making such things the matters of sport and mockery, playing and trifling with them, is certainly prohibited, as an intolerably vain and wicked practice. It is an infallible sign of a vain and light spirit, which considereth little, and cannot distinguish things, to talk slightly concerning persons of high dignity, to whom especial respect is due; or about matters of great importance, which deserve very serious consideration. No man speaketh, or should speak, of his prince, that which he hath not weighed, whether it will consist with that veneration which should be preserved inviolate to him: and is not the same, is not much greater care to be used in regard to the incomparably great and glorious Majesty of heaven? Yes, surely: as we should not without great awe think of him; so we should not presume to mention his name, his word, his institutions, any thing immediately belonging to him, without profoundest reverence and dread. It is the most enormous sauciness that can be imagined, to speak petulantly or pertly concerning him; especially considering, that whatever we do say about him, we do utter it in his presence, and to his very face. *For there is not* (as the holy Psalmist considered) *a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.*[e] No man also hath the heart to droll, or thinks raillery convenient in cases nearly touching his life, his health, his estate, or his fame: and are the true life and health of our soul, are interest in God's favour and mercy, are everlasting glory and bliss, affairs of less moment? Are the treasures and joys of paradise, or the damages and torments in hell, more jesting maters? No certainly, no: in all reason, therefore, it becometh us, and it infinitely concerneth us, whenever we think of these things, to be in best earnest, always to speak of them in most sober sadness.

The proper objects of common mirth and sportful divertisement are mean and petty matters; any thing at least is by playing therewith made such: great things are thereby diminished and debased; especially sacred things do grievously suffer thence, being with extreme indecency and indignity depressed beneath themselves, when they become the subjects of flashy wit, or the entertainments of frothy merriment: to sacrifice their honour to our vain pleasure, being like the ridiculous fondness of that people, which, as Ælian reporteth, worshipping a fly, did offer up an ox thereto. These things were by God instituted, and proposed to us for purposes quite different; to compose our hearts, and settle our fancies in a most serious frame; to breed inward satisfaction, and joy purely spiritual; to exercise our most solemn thoughts, and employ our gravest dis-

* The two greatest men and gravest divines of their time (S. Greg. Naz and S. Basil), could entertain one another with facetious epistles.—*Greg. Naz.* Ep. vii. ad *Basil.* Σὺ σκώπτε καὶ διάστυρε,—Et. Ep. viii.

† Τὸ γελᾶν, καὶ ἀστεῖα λέγειν, οὐ δοκεῖ μὲν ὡμολογημένον ἁμάρτημα εἶναι, ἄγει δὲ, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ε.

‡ Ὁ εὐτραπελευόμενος κατήγορος ἔσται ταχέως.—Chrys.

[e] Psal. cxxxix. 4.

courses; all our speech, therefore, about them should be *wholesome*, apt to afford good instruction, or to excite good affections; *good* (as St. Paul speaketh) *for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*[f]

If we must be facetious and merry, the field is wide and spacious; there are matters enough in the world beside these most august and dreadful things, to try our faculties, and please our humour with; everywhere light and ludicrous things occur: it therefore doth argue a marvellous poverty of wit, and barrenness of invention, no less than a strange defect of goodness, and want of discretion in those who can devise no other subjects to frolic upon beside these, of all most improper and perilous; who cannot seem ingenious under the charge of so highly trespassing upon decency, disclaiming wisdom, wounding the ears of others, and their own consciences. Seem ingenious, I say; for seldom those persons really are such, or are capable to discover any wit in a wise and manly way. It is not the excellency of their fancies, which in themselves usually are sorry and insipid enough, but the uncouthness of their presumption; not their extraordinary wit, but their prodigious rashness, which is to be admired. They are gazed on, as the doers of bold tricks, who dare perform that which no sober man will attempt: they do indeed rather deserve themselves to be laughed at, than their conceits. For what can be more ridiculous than we do make ourselves, when we do thus fiddle and fool with our own souls; when, to make vain people merry, we incense God's earnest displeasure; when, to raise a fit of present laughter, we expose ourselves to endless wailing and woe; when, to be reckoned wits, we prove ourselves stark wild? Surely to this case we may accommodate that of a truly great wit, King Solomon; *I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?*[g]

2. All injurious, abusive, scurrilous jesting, which causelessly or needlessly tendeth to the disgrace, damage, vexation, or prejudice in any kind of our neighbour (provoking his displeasure, grating on his modesty, stirring passion in him), is also prohibited. When men, to raise an admiration of their wit, to please themselves, or gratify the humour of other men, do expose their neighbour to scorn and contempt, making ignominious reflections upon his person or his actions, taunting his real imperfections, or fastening imaginary ones upon him, they transgress their duty, and abuse their wits;* it is not urbanity, or genuine facetiousness, but uncivil rudeness, or vile malignity. To do thus, as it is the office of mean and base spirits, unfit for any worthy or weighty employments, so it is full of inhumanity, of iniquity, of indecency and folly.† For the weaknesses of men, of what kind soever (natural or moral, in quality or in act), considering whence they spring, and how much we are all subject to them, and do need excuse for them, do in equity challenge compassion to be had of them; not complacency to be taken in them, or mirth drawn from them; they, in respect to common humanity, should rather be studiously connived at and concealed, or mildly excused, than wilfully laid open, and wantonly descanted upon; they rather are to be deplored secretly, than openly derided.

The reputation of men is too noble a sacrifice to be offered up to vain glory, fond pleasure, or ill humour; it is a good far more dear and precious, than to be prostituted for idle sport and divertisement. It becometh us not to trifle with that, which in common estimation is of so great moment; to play rudely with a thing so very brittle, yet of so vast price; which being once broken or cracked, it is very hard, and scarce possible, to repair.‡ A small transient pleasure, a tickling the ears, wagging the lungs, forming the face into a smile, a giggle, or a hum, are not to be purchased with the grievous distaste and smart, perhaps with the real damage and mischief of our neighbour, which attend upon contempt.[h]

[f] 1 Tim. vi. 3; Eph. iv. 29.

[g] Eccles. ii. 2.

* —solutus Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis, Hic niger est.—*Hor. Sat.* i. 4.

† Ὁ δὲ βωμολόχος ἥττων ἐστὶ τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ οὔτε ἑαυτοῦ οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεχόμενος, εἰ γέλωτα ποιήσει.—Arist. Eth. iv. 8.

‡ Vitrea fama.—*Hor.*

[h] Prov. xxvi. 18, 19,—As a mad man, who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? Οἱ ἐνεδρεύοντες τοὺς φίλους.—LXX.

This is not jesting surely, but bad earnest: it is wild mirth which is the mother of grief to those whom we should tenderly love; it is unnatural sport, which breedeth displeasure in them whose delight it should promote, whose liking it should procure: it crosseth the nature and design of this way of speaking; which is to cement and ingratiate society, to render conversation pleasant and sprightly, for mutual satisfaction and comfort.

True festivity is called *salt;* and such it should be, giving a smart but savoury relish to discourse; exciting an appetite, not irritating disgust; cleansing sometime, but never creating a sore; and, *ἐὰν μωρανθῇ, if it become thus insipid,** or unsavoury, *it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.*[i] Such jesting which doth not season wholesome or harmless discourse, but giveth a hautgout to putrid and poisonous stuff, gratifying distempered palates and corrupt stomachs, is indeed odious and despicable folly, *to be cast out* with loathing, *to be trodden under foot* with contempt.† If a man offends in this sort to please himself, it is scurvy malignity; if to delight others, it is base servility and flattery: upon the first score he is buffoon to himself; upon the last, a fool to others. And well in common speech are such practisers so termed, the grounds of that practice being so vain, and the effect so unhappy. *The heart of fools* (saith the Wise Man) *is in the house of mirth;*[j] meaning, it seems, especially such hurtfully-wanton mirth: for it is, as he farther tells us, the property of fools to delight in doing harm: *It is a sport to a fool to do mischief.*[k] Is it not in earnest most palpable folly for so mean ends to do so great harm; to disoblige men in sport; to lose friends, and get enemies, for a conceit; out of a light humour to provoke fierce wrath, and breed tough hatred; to engage oneself consequently very far in strife, danger, and trouble?* No way certainly is more apt to produce such effects than this; nothing more speedily inflameth, or more thoroughly engageth men, or sticketh longer in men's hearts and memories, than bitter taunts and scoffs: whence this honey soon turns into gall; these jolly comedies do commonly terminate in woful tragedies.

Especially this scurrilous and scoffing way is then most detestable, when it not only exposeth the blemishes and infirmities of men, but abuseth piety and virtue themselves; flouting persons for their constancy in devotion, or their strict adherence to a conscientious practice of duty; aiming to effect that which Job complaineth of, *The just upright man is laughed to scorn;* resembling those whom the Psalmist thus describeth: *Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect;* serving good men as Jeremy was served: *The word of the Lord* (saith he) *was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily.*[l]

This practice doth evidently, in the highest degree, tend to the disparagement and discouragement of goodness; aiming to expose it, and to render men ashamed thereof; and it manifestly procedeth from a desperate corruption of mind, from a mind hardened and emboldened, sold and enslaved to wickedness: whence they who deal therein are in holy Scripture represented as egregious sinners, or persons superlatively wicked, under the name of *scorners* (*λοιμοὺς pests*, or pestilent men, the Greek translators call them, properly enough in regard to the effects of their practice;)† concerning whom the Wise Man, signifying how God will meet with them in their own way, saith, *Surely the Lord*

* Nimium risus pretium est, si probitatis impendio constat.—*Quint.*

† Εἰ καλὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα, τί τοῖς μίμοις ἀφίεται; μίμος γινῃ; καὶ οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ;—Chrys.

[i] Matt. v. 13. [j] Eccles vii. 4.

[k] Prov. x. 23.

* Fools make a mock of sin.—Prov. xiv. 9.

Potius amicum quam dictum perdidi.

——— dummodo risum
Excutiat sibi, non hic cuiquam parcet amico.
Hor. Sat. i. 4.

——— dicax idem, et Tiberium acerbis facetiis irridere solitus, quarum apud præpotentes in longum memoria est.—*Tac.* v. *Ann.* p. 184.

† Πάλιν δὲ τοῦτο Χριστιανοῦ, τὸ κωμῳδεῖν.—Chrys. in Eph. Or. 17.

Γλῶσσαν ἔχεις, οὐχ ἵνα ἕτερον κωμῳδήσῃς, ἀλλ' ἵνα εὐχαριστήσῃς τῷ Θεῷ.—Idem.

[l] Job xii. 4; Psal. lxiv. 3, 4; Jer. xx. 8.

scorneth the scorners. *Ἐμπαίκτας scoffers* (or *mockers*), St. Peter termeth them, *who walk according to their own lusts;*[m] who not being willing to practise, are ready to deride virtue; thereby striving to seduce others into their pernicious courses.

This offence also proportionably groweth more criminal, as it presumeth to reach persons eminent in dignity or worth, unto whom special veneration is appropriate. This adjoineth sauciness to scurrility, and advanceth the wrong thereof into a kind of sacrilege. It is not only injustice, but profaneness, *to abuse the gods.*[n] Their station is a sanctuary from all irreverence and reproach; they are seated on high, that we may only look up to them with respect; their defects are not to be seen, or not to be touched by malicious or wanton wits, by spiteful or scornful tongues: the diminution of their credit is a public mischief, and the State itself doth suffer in their becoming objects of scorn; not only themselves are vilified and degraded, but the great affairs they manage are obstructed, the justice they administer is disparaged thereby.

In fine, no jesting is allowable, which is not thoroughly innocent: it is an unworthy perverting of wit to employ it in biting and scratching; in working prejudice to any man's reputation or interest; in needlessly incensing any man's anger or sorrow; in raising animosities, dissensions, and feuds among any.

Whence it is somewhat strange, that any men, from so mean and silly a practice, should expect commendation, or that any should afford regard thereto; the which it is so far from meriting, that indeed contempt and abhorrence are due to it. Men do truly more render themselves despicable than others, when, without just ground, or reasonable occasion, they do attack others in this way. That such a practice doth ever find any encouragement or acceptance—whence can it proceed, but from the bad nature and small judgment of some persons? For to any man who is endued with any sense of goodness, and hath a competence of true wit, or a right knowledge of good manners (who knows—*inurbanun lepido seponere dicto*),[o] it cannot but be unsavoury and loathsome. The repute it obtaineth is in all respects unjust. So would it appear, not only were the cause to be decided in the court of morality, because it consists not with virtue and wisdom; but even before any competent judges of wit itself. For he overthrows his own pretence, and cannot reasonably claim any interest in wit, who doth thus behave himself: he prejudgeth himself to want wit, who cannot descry fit matter to divert himself or others; he discovereth a great straitness and sterility of good invention, who cannot in all the wide field of things find better subjects of discourse; who knows not how to be ingenious within reasonable compass, but to pick up a sorry conceit is forced to make excursions beyond the bounds of honesty and decency.

Neither is it any argument of considerable ability in him that haps to please this way; a slender faculty will serve the turn. The sharpness of his speech cometh not from wit so much as from choler, which furnisheth the lowest inventions with a kind of pungent expression, and giveth an edge to every spiteful word:* so that any dull wretch doth seem to scold eloquently and ingeniously. Commonly also satirical taunts do owe their seeming piquancy, not to the speaker or his words, but to the subject, and the hearers; the matter conspiring with the bad nature or the vanity of men, who love to laugh at any rate, and to be pleased at the expense of other men's repute; conceiting themselves extolled by the depression of their neighbour, and hoping to gain by his loss. Such customers they are that maintain the bitter wits, who otherwise would want trade, and might go a-begging. For commonly they who seem to excel this way are miserably flat in other discourse, and most dully serious: they have a particular unaptness to describe any good thing, or commend any worthy person; being destitute of right ideas, and proper terms answerable to such purposes: their representations of that kind are absurd and

[m] Prov. iii. 34; 2 Pet. iii. 3.
[n] Exod. xxii. 28.

* Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur: quippe adulationi fœdum crimen servitutis, malignitati falsa species libertatis inest. —*Tac. Hist.* i. *init.*

[o] Hor.

unhandsome; their elogies (to use their own way of speaking) are in effect satires, and they can hardly more abuse a man than by attempting to commend him; like those in the Prophet, who were *wise to do ill, but to do well had no knowledge.*[p]

3. I pass by, that it is very culpable to be facetious in obscene and smutty matters. Such things are not to be discoursed on either side in jest or in earnest; they must not, as St. Paul saith, be *so much as named among Christians:*[q] to meddle with them is not to disport, but to defile oneself and others. There is indeed no more certain sign of a mind utterly debauched from piety and virtue, than affecting such talk. But farther,

4. All unreasonable jesting is blameable. As there are some proper seasons of relaxation, when we may *desipere in loco;* so there are some times and circumstances of things, wherein it concerneth and becometh men to be serious in mind, grave in demeanour, and plain in discourse; when to sport in this way is to do indecently, or uncivilly, to be impertinent, or troublesome.*

It comporteth not well with the presence of superiors, before whom it becometh us to be composed and modest: much less with the performance of sacred offices, which require an earnest attention, and most serious frame of mind.

In deliberations and debates about affairs of great importance, the simple manner of speaking to the point is the proper, easy, clear, and compendious way: facetious speech there serves only to obstruct and entangle business, to lose time, and protract the result.† The shop and exchange will scarce endure jesting in their lower transactions: the senate, the court of justice, the church, do much more exclude it from their more weighty consultations. Whenever it justleth out, or hindereth the dispatch of other serious business, taking up the room, or swallowing the time due to it, or indisposing the minds of the audience to attend it, then it is unseasonable and pestilent. *Παίζειν, ἵνα σπουδάζῃς,*[r] *to play, that we may be seriously busy,* is the good rule of Anacharsis, implying the subordination of sport to business, as a condiment and furtherance, not an impediment or clog thereto. He that for his sport neglects his business, deserves indeed to be reckoned among children; and children's fortune will attend him, to be pleased with toys, and to fail of substantial profit.

It is, again, improper (because indeed uncivil and inhumane) to jest with persons that are in a sad or afflicted condition,* as arguing want of due considering or due commiserating their case: it appears a kind of insulting upon their misfortune, and is apt to foment their grief. Even in our own case, upon any disastrous occurrence to ourselves, it would not be seemly to frolic it thus; it would signify want of due regard to the frowns of God, and the strokes of his hand; it would cross the Wise Man's advice, *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.*[s]

It is also not seasonable or civil to be jocund in this way with those who desire to be serious, and like not the humour. Jocularity should not be forcibly obtruded, but by a kindly conspiracy, or tacit compact, slip into conversation: consent and compliance give all the life thereto. Its design is to sweeten and ease society; when to the contrary, it breedeth offence or incumbrance, it is worse than vain and unprofitable. From these instances we may collect when in other like cases it is unseasonable, and therefore culpable. Farther,

5. To affect, admire, or highly to value this way of speaking, either absolutely in itself, or in comparison to the serious and plain way of speech, and thence to be drawn into an immoderate use thereof, is blameable. A man of ripe age and sound judgment, for refreshment to himself, or in complaisance to others, may sometimes condescend to play in this or in any other harmless way: but to be fond of it, to prosecute it with a careful or painful eagerness, to doat and dwell upon it, to reckon it a brave or a fine thing, a singular matter of commen-

* Vitandum ne petulans, ne superbum, ne loco, ne tempori alienum ne præparatum et domo allatum videatur.—*Quint.*

† Μή μοι τὰ κόμψ', ἀλλ' ὧν πόλει δεῖ.—*Eurip. Arist. Pol.* ii. 4.

[p] Jer. iv. 22. [q] Eph. v. 3.

* Adversus miseros inhumanus est jocus.—*Quint.*

[r] Arist. Eth. x. 6. [s] Eccles. vii. 14.

dation, a transcendent accomplishment, anywise preferable to rational endowments, or comparable to the moral excellences of our mind (to solid knowledge, or sound wisdom, or true virtue and goodness), this is extremely childish or brutish, and far below a man. What can be more absurd than to make a business of play, to be studious and laborious in toys, to make a profession or drive a trade of impertinency?* what more plain nonsense can there be, than to be earnest in jest, to be continual in divertisement, or constant in pastime; to make extravagance all our way, and sauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child, that is ever busy, yet never hath any thing to do? or the life of that mimical brute, which is always active in playing uncouth and unlucky tricks; which, could it speak, might surely pass well for a professed wit?

The proper work of man, the grand drift of human life, is to follow reason (that noble spark kindled in us from heaven; that princely and powerful faculty, which is able to reach so lofty objects, and to achieve so mighty works;) not to soothe fancy, that brutish, shallow, and giddy power, able to perform nothing worthy much regard. *We are not* (even Cicero could tell us) *born for play and jesting; but for severity, and the study of graver and greater affairs.*† Yes, we were purposely designed, and fitly framed, to understand and contemplate, to affect and delight in, to undertake and pursue most noble and worthy things; to be employed in business considerably profitable to ourselves, and beneficial to others: we do therefore strangely debase ourselves, when we do strongly bend our minds to, or set our affections upon such toys.

Especially to do so is unworthy of a Christian; that is, of a person who is advanced to so high a rank, and so glorious relations; who hath so excellent objects of his mind and affections presented before him, and so excellent rewards for his care and pains proposed to him; who is engaged in affairs of so worthy nature, and so immense consequence: for him to be zealous about quibbles, for him to be ravished with puny conceits and expressions, it is a wondrous oversight, and an enormous indecency.

He, indeed, that prefers any faculty to reason, disclaims the privilege of being a man, and understands not the worth of his own nature; he that prizes any quality beyond virtue and goodness, renounces the title of a Christian, and knows not how to value the dignity of his profession. It is these two, reason and virtue, in conjunction, which produce all that is considerably good and great in the world. Fancy can do little; doeth never any thing well, except as directed and wielded by them. Do pretty conceits or humorous talk carry on any business, or perform any work? No; they are ineffectual and fruitless; often they disturb, but they never dispatch any thing with good success. It is simple reason, as dull and dry as it seemeth, which expediteth all the grand affairs, which accomplisheth all the mighty works that we see done in the world. In truth, therefore, as one diamond is worth numberless bits of glass: so one solid reason is worth innumerable fancies: one grain of true science and sound wisdom in real worth and use doth outweigh loads, if any loads can be, of freakish wit. To rate things otherwise, doth argue great weakness of judgment, and fondness of mind. So to conceit of this way signifieth a weak mind; and much to delight therein rendereth it so: nothing more debaseth the spirit of a man, or more rendereth it light and trifling.*

Hence if we must be venting pleasant conceits, we should do it *as if we did it not*, carelessly and unconcernedly; not standing upon it, or valuing ourselves for it; we should do it with measure and moderation; not giving up ourselves thereto, so as to mind it, or delight in it more than in any other thing: we should

* Σπουδάζειν καὶ πονεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν, ἠλίθιον φαίνεται, καὶ λίαν παιδικόν.—Arist. Eth. x. 6.

† Neque enim ita generati a natura sumus, ut ad ludum jocumque facti videamur; sed ad severitatem potius, et ad quædam studia graviora atque majora.—*Cic. Off.* i.

* Ὡς μὴ συμβοίνειν κατὰ ταυτὴν ψυχῆς νῆψιν, καὶ εὐτραπελίας διάχυσιν.—Bas. Const. Mon. 12.

Πολλοὺς συμβαίνει τοὺς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀσχολουμένους, τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου διαμαρτάνειν, τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς γελοῖα μὲν διαχεομένης, καὶ τὸ τῆς φρονήσεως σύννουν καὶ πεπυκνωμένον καταλυούσης.—Ibid.

Jocorum frequens usus omne animis pondus, omnemque vim eripiet.—*Sen. de Tranq.* c. xv.

Ἡ εὐτραπελία μαλακὴν ποιεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, ῥᾳθυμὸν, ἀναπεπτωκυῖαν.—Chrys. in Eph. 17.

not be so intent upon it as to become remiss in affairs more proper or needful for us; so as to nauseate serious business, or disrelish the more worthy entertainments of our minds. This is the great danger of it, which we daily see men to incur; they are so bewitched with a humour of being witty themselves, or of hearkening to the fancies of others, that it is this only which they can like or savour, which they can endure to think or talk of. It is a great pity, that men who would seem to have so much wit, should so little understand themselves. But farther,

6. Vain-glorious ostentation this way is very blameable. All ambition, all vanity, all conceitedness, upon whatever ground they are founded, are absolutely unreasonable and silly: but yet those, being grounded on some real ability, or some useful skill, are wise and manly in comparison to this, which standeth on a foundation so manifestly slight and weak. The old philosophers by a severe father[t] were called *animalia gloriæ*, *animals of glory;* and by a satirical poet they were termed *bladders of vanity:** but they at least did catch at praise from praiseworthy knowledge; they were puffed up with a wind which blowed some good to mankind; they sought glory from that which deserved glory, if they had not sought it; it was a substantial and solid credit which they did affect, resulting from successful enterprises of strong reason and stout industry: but these *animalcula gloriæ*, these flies, these insects of glory, these, not bladders, but bubbles of vanity, would be admired and praised for that which is nowise admirable or laudable;† for the casual hits and emergencies of roving fancy; for stumbling on an odd conceit or phrase, which signifieth nothing, and is as superficial as the smile, as hollow as the noise it causeth. Nothing certainly in nature is more ridiculous than a self-conceited wit, who deemeth himself somebody, and greatly pretendeth to commendation from so pitiful and worthless a thing as a knack of trifling.

7. Lastly, it is our duty never so far to engage ourselves in this way, as thereby to lose or to impair that habitual seriousness, modesty and sobriety of mind, that steady composedness, gravity and constancy of demeanour, which become Christians. We should continually keep our minds intent upon our *high calling*, and grand interests; ever well tuned, and ready for the performance of holy devotions, and the practice of most serious duties with earnest attention and fervent affection: wherefore we should never suffer them to be dissolved into levity, or disordered into a wanton frame, indisposing us for religious thoughts and actions. We ought always in our behaviour to maintain not only τὸ πρέπον, a fitting *decency*, but also τὸ σεμνὸν, a stately *gravity*, a kind of venerable majesty, suitable to that high rank which we bear of God's friends and children; adorning our holy profession, and guarding us from all impressions of sinful vanity.[u] Wherefore we should not let ourselves be transported into any excessive pitch of lightness, inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, our Christian state and business.* Gravity and modesty are the fences of piety, which being once slighted, sin will easily attempt and encroach upon us. So the old Spanish gentleman may be interpreted to have been wise, who, when his son, upon a voyage to the Indies, took his leave of him, gave him this odd advice: *My son, in the first place keep thy gravity, in the next place fear God:*† intimating, that a man must first be serious before he can be pious.

To conclude, as we need not to be demure, so must we not be impudent; as we should not be sour, so ought we not to be fond; as we may be free, so we should not be vain; as we may well stoop to friendly complaisance, so we should take heed of falling into contemptible levity. If without wronging others, or derogating from ourselves, we can be facetious; if we can use our wits in jesting innocently and conveniently; we may sometimes do it: but let us, in compliance with St. Paul's direction, beware of *foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient.*

* Κενῆς οἰήσιος ἔμπλεοι ἀσκοί.—Timon.
† Risus—tenuissimus ingenii fructus.—*Cic. de Orat.* ii.

* Dictum potius aliquando perdet, quam minuet autoritatem.—*Quint.* vi. 3.
† Strad. Infam. Famiani.
[t] Tertul.
[u] Phil. iv. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 8; Tit. ii. 10.

Now the God of grace and *peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.[v]

SERMON XV.

AGAINST RASH AND VAIN SWEARING.

JAMES v. 12.—*But above all things, my brethren, swear not.*

AMONG other precepts of good life (directing the practice of virtue and abstinence from sin) St. James doth insert this about swearing, couched in an expression denoting his great earnestness, and apt to excite our special attention. Therein he doth not mean universally to interdict the use of oaths (for that in some cases is not only lawful, but very expedient, yea needful, and required from us as a duty;) but that swearing which our Lord had expressly prohibited to his disciples, and which thence, questionless, the *brethren* to whom St. James did write did well understand themselves obliged to forbear, having learnt so in the first catechisms of Christian institution; that is, needless and heedless swearing in ordinary conversation: a practice then frequent in the world, both among Jews and Gentiles; the which also, to the shame of our age, is now so much in fashion, and with some men in vogue; the invoking God's name, appealing to his testimony, and provoking his judgment, upon any slight occasion, in common talk, with vain incogitancy, or profane boldness. From such practice the holy Apostle dehorteth in terms importing his great concernedness and implying the matter to be of highest importance: for, Πρὸ πάντων, saith he, *Before all things, my brethren, do not swear;* as if he did apprehend this sin of all other to be one of the most heinous and pernicious. Could he have said more, would he have said so much, if he had not conceived the matter to be of exceeding weight and consequence? And that it is so, I mean now, by God's help, to show you, by proposing some considerations, whereby the heinous wickedness, together with the monstrous folly, of such rash and vain swearing will appear; the which being laid to heart will, I hope, effectually dissuade and deter from it.

I. Let us consider the nature of an oath, and what we do when we adventure to swear.

It is (as it is phrased in the Decalogue, and otherwhere in holy Scripture[a]) an *assuming the name of our God*, and applying it to our purpose, to countenance and confirm what we say.*

It is an invocation of God as a most faithful witness concerning the truth of our words, or the sincerity of our meaning.[b]

It is an appeal to God as a most upright Judge, whether we do prevaricate in asserting what we do not believe true, or in promising what we are not firmly resolved to perform.[c]

It is a formal engagement of God to be the Avenger of our trespassing in violation of truth or faith.[d]

It is a *binding our souls*† with a most strict and solemn obligation, to answer before God, and to undergo the issue of his judgment about what we affirm or undertake.

Such an oath is represented to us in holy Scripture.

Whence we may collect, that swearing doth require great modesty and composedness of spirit, very serious consideration and solicitous care, that we be not rude and saucy with God, *in taking up his name*, and prostituting it to vile or mean uses; that we do not abuse or debase his authority, by citing it to aver falsehoods or impertinences; that we do not slight his venerable justice, by rashly provoking it against us; that we do not

[v] Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

* Plurima firmantur jurejurando——diis immortalibus interpositis tum judicibus, tum testibus.—*Cic. de Leg.* ii. p. 326.

† Num. xxx. 2. Πᾶς ὅρκος εἰς κατάραν τελευτᾷ τῆς ἐπιορκίας.—Plut. in Capit. Rom. p. 491.

[a] Exod. xx. 8; Prov. xxx. 9.

[b] Gen. xxxi. 50; Judg. xi. 10; 1 Sam. xii. 5; Jer. xlii. 5; Job xvi. 19; Mal. iii. 5; 1 John v. 9.

[c] Gen. xxxi. 53; 1 Sam. xxiv. 5; 1 Kings viii. 31, 32; ii. 23; xix. 2; xx. 10; Neh. v. 12, 13.

[d] Ruth i. 17; 2 Kings vi. 31; 2 Sam. iii. 9, 35; xix. 13; 1 Sam. xiv. 44; iii. 17; xx. 13.

precipitantly throw our souls into most dangerous snares and intricacies.

For, let us reflect and consider: what a presumption is it without due regard and reverence to lay hold on God's name; with unhallowed breath to vent and toss that *great* and *glorious*, that most *holy*, that *reverend*, that *fearful* and *terrible name* of the Lord our God, the great Creator, the mighty Sovereign, the dreadful Judge of all the world;[e] that name which all heaven with profoundest submission doth adore; which the angelical powers, the brightest and purest seraphim, without *hiding their faces*,[f] and reverential horror, cannot utter or hear; the very thought whereof should strike awe through our hearts, the mention whereof would make any sober man to tremble; *Πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπον*, *For how*, saith St. Chrysostom,[g] *is it not absurd, that a servant should not dare to call his master by name, or bluntly and ordinarily to mention him; yet that we slightly and contemptuously should in our mouth toss about the Lord of angels?*

How is it not absurd, if we have a garment better than the rest, that we forbear to use it continually; but in the most slight and common way do wear the name of God?[h]

How grievous indecency is it, at every turn to summon our Maker, and call down Almighty God from heaven to attend our leisure, to vouch our idle prattle, to second our giddy passions, to concern his truth, his justice, his power, in our trivial affairs?

What a wildness is it to dally with that judgment upon which the eternal doom of all creatures dependeth, at which *the pillars of heaven are astonished*,[i] which hurled down legions of angels from the top of heaven and happiness into the bottomless dungeon? the which, as grievous sinners, of all things we have most reason to dread; and about which no sober man can otherwise think, than did that great king, the holy Psalmist, who said, *My flesh trembleth for thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.*[j]

How prodigious a madness is it, without any constraint or needful cause, to incur so horrible danger, to rush upon a curse; to defy that vengeance, the least touch or breath whereof can dash us to nothing, or thrust us down into extreme and endless wo?

Who can express the wretchedness of that folly which so entangleth us with inextricable knots, and enchaineth our souls so rashly with desperate obligations?

Wherefore he that would but a little mind what he doeth when he dareth to swear, what it is to meddle with the adorable name, the venerable testimony, the formidable judgment, the terrible vengeance of the Divine Majesty, into what a case he putteth himself, how extreme hazard he runneth thereby, would assuredly have little heart to swear, without greatest reason, and most urgent need; hardly without trembling would he undertake the most necessary and solemn oath; much cause would he see *σέβεσθαι ὅρκον to adore*, to fear an oath: which to do, the divine Preacher maketh the character of a good man; *As* (saith he) *is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*[k]

In fine, even a heathen philosopher, considering the nature of an oath, did conclude the unlawfulness thereof in such cases. For, *Seeing* (saith he) *an oath doth call God for witness, and proposeth him for umpire and voucher of the things it saith; therefore to induce God so upon occasion of human affairs, or, which is all one, upon small and slight accounts, doth imply contempt of him: wherefore we ought wholly to shun swearing, except upon occasions of highest necessity.*[*]

II. We may consider, that swearing (agreeably to its nature, or natural aptitude and tendency), is represented in holy Scripture as a special part of religious worship, or devotion toward God; in the due performance whereof we do avow him for the true God and Governor of the world; we piously do acknowledge

[e] Psal. xcix. 3; cxi. 9; cxlviii. 13; Deut. xxviii. 58.
[f] Isa. vi. 2; Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ.
[g] Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ, p. 514.
[h] Id. Ἀνδρ. θ', p. 525.
[i] Job xxvi. 11. [j] Psal. cxix. 120

[*] Ὁ γὰρ ὅρκος μάρτυρα τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖ, καὶ μεσίτην αὐτὸν καὶ ἐγγυητὴν ἐφ' οἷς λέγει προῖσχεται· τὸ γοῦν ἐπὶ ἀνθρωπίνοις πράγμασι (ταπτὸν δὲ εἰπεῖν μικροῖς καὶ εὐτελέσι) τὸν Θεὸν παράγειν, καταφρόνησίν τινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπογράφει· διὸ χρὴ παραιτεῖσθαι τὸν ὅρκον, &c.—Simpl. in Epict. cap. xliv.
[k] Eccles. ix. 2

his principal attributes and special prerogatives (his omnipresence and omniscience, extending itself to our most inward thoughts, our secretest purposes, our closest retirements; his watchful providence over all our actions, affairs, and concerns; his faithful goodness, in favouring truth and protecting right: his exact justice, in patronising sincerity, and chastising perfidiousness;) his being supreme Lord over all persons, and Judge paramount in all causes; his readiness in our need, upon our humble imploration and reference, to undertake the arbitration of matters controverted, and the care of administering justice, for the maintenance of truth and right, of loyalty and fidelity, of order and peace among men. Swearing doth also intimate a pious trust and confidence in God; as Aristotle observeth.*

Such things a serious oath doth imply, to such purposes swearing naturally serveth: and therefore to signify or effectuate them, divine institution hath devoted it.

God, in goodness, to such ends, hath pleased to lend us his great name; allowing us to cite him for a witness, to have recourse to his bar, to engage his justice and power, whenever the case deserveth and requireth it, or when we cannot by other means well assure the sincerity of our meaning, or secure the constancy of our resolutions.

Yea in such exigencies he doth exact this practice from us, as an instance of our religious confidence in him, and as a service is conducible to his glory: for it is a precept in his law, of moral nature, and eternal obligation, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and shall swear by his name.*[l] It is the character of a religious man to swear with due reverence and upright conscience. For, *The king* (saith the Psalmist) *shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory; but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*[m] It is a distinctive mark of God's people, according to that of the Prophet Jeremy, *And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name——then shall they be built in the midst of my people.*[n] It is predicted concerning the evangelical times, *Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear:* and, *That he who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself by the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.*[o]

As therefore all other acts of devotion, wherein immediate application is made to the Divine Majesty, should never be performed without most hearty intention, most serious consideration, most lowly reverence; so neither should this grand one, wherein God is so nearly touched, and his chief attributes so much concerned: the which indeed doth involve both prayer and praise, doth require the most devotional acts of faith and fear.

We therefore should so perform it as not to incur that reproof: *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*[p]

When we seem most formally to avow God, to confess his omniscience, to confide in his justice; we should not really disregard him, and in effect signify, that we do not think he doth know what we say, or mind what we do.

If we do presume to offer this service, we should do it in the manner appointed by himself, according to the conditions prescribed in the Prophet: *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness:*[q] *in truth*, taking heed that our meaning be conformable to the sense of our words, and our words to the verity of things; *in judgment*, having with careful deliberation examined and weighed that which we assert or promise; *in righteousness*, being satisfied in conscience, that we do not therein infringe any rule of piety toward God, of equity toward men, of sobriety and discretion in regard to ourselves.

The cause of our swearing must be needful, or very expedient; the design of it must be honest and useful to considerable purposes (tending to God's honour, our neighbour's benefit, our own welfare;) the matter of it should be not only just and lawful, but worthy and

* Εὐσεβὶς τὸ θέλειν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιτρέπειν. It is a pious thing willingly to commend our case or controversy to God.—*Arist. Rhet.* i. 48.

[l] Deut. x. 20; vi. 13. [m] Psal. lxiii. 11. [n] Jer. xii. 16. [o] Isa. xlv. 23; lxv. 16. [p] Matt. xv. 7; Isa. xxix. 13. [q] Jer. iv. 2.

weighty; the manner ought to be grave and solemn, our mind being framed to earnest attention, and endued with pious affections suitable to the occasion.

Otherwise, if we do venture to swear, without due advice and care, without much respect and awe, upon any slight or vain (not to say bad or unlawful) occasion; we then desecrate swearing, and are guilty of profaning a most sacred ordinance; the doing so doth imply base hypocrisy, or lewd mockery, or abominable wantonness and folly; in boldly invading, and vainly trifling with the most august duties of religion.[r] Such swearing, therefore, is very dishonourable and injurious to God, very prejudicial to religion, very repugnant to piety.

III. We may consider that the swearing prohibited is very noxious to human society.

The great prop of society (which upholdeth the safety, peace, and welfare thereof, in observing laws, dispensing justice, discharging trusts, keeping contracts, and holding good correspondence mutually) is conscience, or a sense of duty toward God, obliging to perform what is right and equal; quickened by hope of rewards, and fear of punishments from him: secluding which principle, no worldly consideration is strong enough to hold men fast; or can farther dispose many to do right, or observe faith, or hold peace, than appetite, or interest, or humour (things very slippery and uncertain) do sway them.

That men should live honestly, quietly, and comfortably together, it is needful that they should live under a sense of God's will, and in awe of the divine power, hoping to please God, and fearing to offend him, by their behaviour respectively.

That justice should be administered between men, it is necessary that testimonies of fact be alleged; and that witnesses should apprehend themselves greatly obliged to discover the truth, according to their conscience, in dark and doubtful cases.

That men should uprightly discharge offices serviceable to public good, it doth behove that they be firmly engaged to perform the trusts reposed in them.

That in affairs of very considerable importance, men should deal with one another with satisfaction of mind and mutual confidence, they must receive competent assurances concerning the integrity, fidelity, and constancy each of other.

That the safety of governors may be preserved, and the obedience due to them maintained secure from attempts to which they are liable (by the treachery, levity, perverseness, timorousness, ambition, all such lusts and ill humours of men), it is expedient that men should be tied with the strictest bands of allegiance.

That controversies emergent about the interests of men should be determined, and an end put to strife by peremptory and satisfactory means, is plainly necessary for common quiet.

Wherefore, for the public interest and benefit of human society, it is requisite that the highest obligations possible should be laid upon the consciences of men.

And such are those of oaths, engaging them to fidelity and constancy in all such cases, out of regard to Almighty God, as the infallible Patron of truth and right, the unavoidable Chastiser of perfidiousness and improbity.

To such purposes, therefore, oaths have ever been applied, as the most effectual instruments of working them; not only among the followers of true and perfect religion, but even among all those who had any glimmering notions concerning a Divine power and providence; who have deemed an oath the safest tie of conscience, and held the violation of it for the most detestable impiety and iniquity. So that what Cicero saith of the Romans, that *their ancestors had no band to constrain faith more strait than an oath*,[s] is true of all other nations; common reason not being able to devise any engagement more obliging than it; it being in the nature of things τελευταῖα πίστις, and ἀχειρώτατον ἀσφαλείας ἐνέχυρον,[t] the utmost assurance, the last resort of human faith, the surest pledge that any man can yield of his trustiness. Hence ever in transactions of highest moment this hath been used to bind the faith of men.

[r] Matt. xv. 7, 8.

[s] Nullum enim vinculum ad adstringendam fidem jurejurando majores arctius esse voluerunt.—*Cic. de Off.* iii.

[t] Dion. Halic. Procop. Diod. Sic.

Hereby nations have been wont to ratify leagues of peace and amity between each other (which therefore the Greeks called ὅρκια.)*

Hereby princes have obliged their subjects to loyalty: and it hath ever been the strongest argument to press that duty, which the Preacher useth: *I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.*[t]

Hereby generals have engaged their soldiers to stick close to them, in bearing hardships and encountering dangers.[u]

Hereby the nuptial league hath been confirmed; the solemnization whereof in temples before God is in effect a most sacred oath.

Hereon the decision of the greatest causes concerning the lives, estates, and reputations of men have depended; so that, as the Apostle saith, *an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*[v]

Indeed such hath the need hereof been ever apprehended, that we may observe, in cases of great importance, no other obligation hath been admitted for sufficient to bind the fidelity and constancy of the most credible persons; so that even the best men hardly could trust the best men without it. For instance,

When Abimelech would assure to himself the friendship of Abraham, although he knew him to be a very pious and righteous person, whose word might be as well taken as any man's, yet, for entire satisfaction, he thus spake to him: *God is with thee in all that thou doest; now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me.*[w]

Abraham, though he did much confide in the honesty of his servant Eliezer, having entrusted him with all his estate, yet in the affair concerning the marriage of his son, he could not but thus oblige him: *Put* (saith he) *I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of earth, that thou wilt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites.*[x]

Laban had good experience of Jacob's fidelity; yet that would not satisfy, but, *The Lord* (said he) *watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness between thee and me. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.*[y]

So did *Jacob make Joseph swear*, that he would *bury him in Canaan:* and *Joseph caused the children of Israel to swear*, that they would *translate his bones.*[z] So did *Jonathan cause* his beloved friend *David to swear*, that he would *show kindness to him, and to his house forever.*[a] The prudence of which course the event sheweth, the total excision of Jonathan's family being thereby prevented; for, *The King*, it is said, *spared Mephiboseth the son of Jonathan, because of the Lord's oath that was between them.*[b]

These instances declare, that there is no security which men can yield comparable to that of an oath; the obligation whereof no man wilfully can infringe, without renouncing the fear of God, and any pretence to his favour.[c]

Wherefore human society will be extremely wronged and damnified by the dissolving or slackening these most sacred bands of conscience: and consequently by their common and careless use; which soon will breed a contempt of them, and render them insignificant, either to bind the swearers, or to ground a trust on their oaths.

As by the rare and reverent use of oaths their dignity is upheld, and their obligation kept fast; so by the frequent and negligent application of them, by the prostituting them to every mean and toyish purpose, heir respect will be quite lost, their strength will be loosed, they will prove unserviceable to public use.

If oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify? If men are wont to play with swearing anywhere, can we expect they should be serious and strict therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard God's testimony, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at any one time, when

* Πρὸς οὓς εἰσιν ἡμῖν ὅρκοι, καὶ φιλίαι.—Polyb.

[t] Eccles. viii. 2. [u] Veget. ii.

[v] Heb. vi. 16. [w] Gen. xxi. 22, 23.

[x] Gen. xv. 3; xxiv. 2, 3, 37.

[y] Gen. xxxi. 49, 50, 53. [z] Gen. l, 5, 25.

[a] 1 Sam. xx. 14, 15, 17. [b] 2 Sam. xxi. 7.

[c] (1 Kings i. 51; Ezra x. 5; Neh. v. 12; xiii. 25.)

every where upon any, upon no occasion they dare to confront and contemn them? Who, then, will be the more trusted for swearing? What satisfaction will any man have from it? The rifeness of this practice, as it is the sign, so it will be the cause, of a general diffidence among men.

Incredible therefore is the mischief which this vain practice will bring in to the public; depriving princes of their best security, exposing the estates of private men to uncertainty, shaking all the confidence men can have in the faith of one another.

For which detriments accruing from this abuse to the public, every vain swearer is responsible; and he would do well to consider, that he will never be able to make reparation for them. And the public is much concerned that this enormity be retrenched.

IV. Let us consider, that rash and vain swearing is very apt often to bring the practiser of it into that most horrible sin of perjury. For *false swearing*, as the Hebrew Wise Man saith, *naturally springeth out of much swearing*:* and, *He* (saith Chrysostom) *that sweareth continually, both willingly and unwillingly, both ignorantly and knowingly, both in earnest and in sport, being often transported by anger, and many other things, will frequently forswear. It is confessed and manifest, that it is necessary for him that sweareth much, to be perjurious.* Ἀμήχανον γὰρ ἀμήχανον, *For* (saith he again) *it is impossible, it is impossible for a mouth addicted to swearing, not frequently to forswear.*† He that sweareth at random, as blind passion moveth, or wanton fancy prompteth, or the tempter suggesteth, often will hit upon asserting that which is false, or promising that which is impossible: that want of conscince and of consideration which do suffer him to violate God's law in swearing, will betray him to the venting of lies, which backed with oaths become perjuries. If sometime what he sweareth doth happen to be true and performable, it doth not free him from guilt; it being his fortune, rather than his care or conscience, which keepeth him from perjury.

V. Such swearing commonly will induce a man to bind himself by oath to unlawful practices; and consequently will entangle him in a woful necessity, either of breaking his oath, or of doing worse, and committing wickedness: so that *swearing*, as St. Chrysostom saith, *hath this misery attending it, that, both transgressed and observed, it plagueth those who are guilty of it.**

Of this perplexity the holy Scripture affordeth two notable instances: the one of Saul, forced to break his rash oaths; the other of Herod, being engaged thereby to commit a most horrid murder.[d]

Had Saul observed his oaths, what injury had he done, what mischief had he produced, in slaughtering his most worthy and most innocent son, the prop and glory of his family, the bulwark of his country, and the grand instrument of salvation to it; in forcing the people to violate their cross oath, and for prevention of one, causing many perjuries? He was therefore fain to desist, and lie under the guilt of breaking his oaths.[e]

And for Herod, the excellent Father thus presseth the consideration of his case: *Take*, saith he, *I beseech you, the chopped off head of St. John, and his warm blood yet trickling down; each of you bear it home with you, and conceive that before your eyes you hear it uttering speech, and saying, Embrace the murderer of me, an oath. That which reproof did not, this an oath did do; that which the tyrant's wrath could not, this the necessity of keeping an oath did effect. For when the tyrant was reprehended publicly in the audience of all men, he bravely did bear the rebuke;*

* Φύεται ἐκ πολυορκίας ψευδορκία.—Philo in Decal. Ne quisquam facili juratione etiam ad perjurium decidisset, et in Ecclesia populo prædicabat, et suos instituerat, ne quis juraret nec ad modicum quidem.—*Posid. in Vit. S. Aug.* cap. xxv.

† Ὁ διηνεκῶς ὀμνὺς, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. p. 553.

Μὴ εἰς ὑπόκρισιν πέσητε, quidam legunt, Jac. v. 12. Vid. Grot.

Οὕτως ἐστὶν ὡμολογημένον καὶ δῆλον, ὅτι τὸν πολύορκον ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐπίορκον εἶναι.—Ibid.

Ἀμήχανον γάρ, ἀμήχανον, στόμα μεμελετηκὸς ὀμνύναι, μὴ συνεχῶς ἐπιορκεῖν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. p. 559.

* Τοῦτο τὸ δεινὸν ἔχει ὁ ὅρκος, ὅτι καὶ παραβαινόμενος καὶ φυλαττόμενος κολάζει τοὺς ἁλισκομένους.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. p. 553.

[d] (1 Sam. xxv. 22, David.) Διὰ τοὺς ὅρκους. Matt. xiv. 9.

[e] Vid. Chrys. ιδ'. Ἀνδρ. 1 Sam. xiv. 45.

*but when he had cast himself into the necessity of oaths, then did he cut off that blessed head.**

VI. Likewise the use of rash swearing will often engage a man in undertakings very inconvenient and detrimental to himself. A man is bound to *perform his vows to the Lord*, whatever they be, whatever damage or trouble thence may accrue to him, if they be not unlawful.[f] It is the law, *That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform.* It is the property of a good man, that *He sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*[g] Wherefore it is the part of a sober man, to be well advised what he doth swear or vow religiously; that he do not put himself into the inextricable strait of committing great sin, or undergoing great inconvenience; that he do not rush into that snare of which the Wise Man speaketh, *It is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy* (or to swallow a sacred obligation), *and after vows to make inquiry*,†[h] seeking how he may disengage himself: the doing which is a folly offensive to God, as the Preacher telleth us: *When* (saith he) *thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.*[i] God will not admit our folly in vowing, as a plea or an excuse for non-performance; he will exact it from us both as a due debt, and as a proper punishment of our impious folly.

For instance, into what loss and mischief, what sorrow, what regret and repentance, did the unadvised vow of Jephtha throw him? the performance whereof, as St. Chrysostom remarketh, God did permit, and order to be commemorated with solemn lamentation, that all posterity might be admonished thereby, and deterred from such precipitant swearing.[k]

VII. Let us consider, that swearing is a sin of all others peculiarly clamorous, and provocative of Divine judgment. God is hardly so much concerned, or in a manner constrained, to punish any other sin as this. He is bound in honour and interest to vindicate his name from the abuse, his authority from the contempt, his holy ordinance from the profanation, which it doth infer. He is concerned to take care that his providence be not questioned, that the dread of his majesty be not voided, that all religion be not overthrown by the outrageous commission thereof with impunity.

It immediately toucheth his name, it expressly calleth upon him to mind it, to judge it, to show himself in avenging it. He may seem deaf or unconcerned, if, being so called and provoked, he doth not declare himself.

There is understood to be a kind of formal compact between him and mankind, obliging him to interpose, to take the matter into his cognizance, being specially addressed to him.

The bold swearer doth importune him to hear, doth rouse him to mark, doth brave him to judge and punish his wickedness.

Hence no wonder that *the flying roll*, a quick and inevitable *curse*, doth surprise the *swearer*, and *cut him off*, as it is in the Prophet.[l] No wonder that so many remarkable instances do occur in history, of signal vengeance inflicted on persons notably guilty of this crime. No wonder that a common practice thereof doth fetch down public judgments; and that, as the Prophets of old did proclaim, *because of swearing the land mourneth.*[m]

VIII. Farther (passing over the special laws against it, the mischievous consequences of it, the sore punishments appointed to it), we may consider, that to common sense vain swearing is a very unreasonable and ill-favoured practice, greatly misbecoming any sober, worthy, or honest person; but especially most absurd and incongruous to a Christian.

For in ordinary conversation what needful or reasonable occasion can intervene of violating this command? If there come under discourse a matter of reason, which is evidently true and certain, then what need can there be of an oath to affirm it, it sufficing to expose it

* Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου λαβόντας—. Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. p. 552.

† Ὥσπερ τινὶ παγίδι κατεχόμενοι, καὶ δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις συνδεδεμένοι. &c. —Chryst. Ἀνδρ. ζ'.

[f] Deut. xxiii. 21; Matt. v. 33; Psal. lxvi. 13, 14.

[g] Deut. xxiii. 23; Psal. xv. 4.

[h] Prov. xx. 25. [i] Eccles. v. 4.

[k] Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιδ'.

[l] Zech. v. 2, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. θ'. p. 525. ιε' p. 565. ιθ'. p. 591.

[m] Jer. xxiii. 10; Hos. ix. 3.

to light, or to propose the evidences for it? If an obscure or doubtful point come to be debated, it will not bear an oath, it will be a strange madness to dare, a great folly to hope the persuading it thereby. What were more ridiculous than to swear the truth of a demonstrable theorem? What more vain than so to assert a disputable problem? Oaths, like wagers, are in such cases no arguments, except of silliness in the users of them.

If a matter of history be started, then if a man be taken for honest, his word will pass for attestation without farther assurance: but if his veracity or probity be doubted, his oath will not be relied on, especially when he doth obtrude it. For it was no less truly than acutely said by the old poet, *Οὐκ ἄνδρος ὅρκοι πίστις, ἀλλ' ὅρκων ἀνήρ,*[n] *The man doth not get credit from an oath, but an oath from the man:* and a greater author, *An oath* (saith St. Chrysostom) *doth not make a man credible, but the testimony of his life, and the exactness of his conversation, and a good repute. Many often have burst with swearing, and persuaded no man; others only nodding have deserved more belief than those who have swore so mightily.** Wherefore oaths, as they are frivolous coming from a person of little worth or conscience, so they are superfluous in the mouth of an honest and worthy person; yea, as they do not increase the credit of the former, so they may impair that of the latter.

A good man (as Socrates did say) *should apparently so demean himself, that his word may be deemed more credible than an oath;*† the constant tenor of his practice vouching for it, and giving it such weight that no asseveration can farther corroborate it.

He should *τοῖς ἔργοις εὐορκεῖν, swear by his good deeds*, and exhibit *βίον ἀξιόπιστον, a life deserving belief*, as Clemens Alexandrinus° saith: so that no man should desire more from him than his bare assertion; but willingly should yield him the privilege which the Athenians granted to Xenocrites, that he should testify without swearing.*

He should be like the Essenes, of whom Josephus saith, that every thing spoken by them was more valid than an oath; whence they declined swearing.†

He should so much confide in his own veracity and fidelity, and so much stand upon them, that he should not deign to offer any pledge for them, implying them to want confirmation.

He should (as St. Hierome saith) *so love truth, that he should suppose himself to have sworn whatsoever he hath said;*‡ and therefore should not be apt to heap another oath on his words.

Upon such accounts common reason directed even Pagan wise men wholly to interdict swearing in ordinary conversation, or about petty matters, as an irrational and immoral practice, unworthy of sober and discreet persons. *Forbear swearing about any matter*, said Plato, cited by Clem. Alex.§ *Avoid swearing, if you can, wholly*, said Epictetus.‖ *For money swear by no god, though you swear truly*, said Isocrates.¶ And divers the like precepts occur in other heathens; the mention whereof may well serve to strike shame into many loose and vain people, bearing the name of Christians.

Indeed, for a true and real Christian, this practice doth especially in a far higher degree misbecome him, upon considerations peculiar to his high calling and holy profession.

Plutarch telleth us, that among the Romans the Flamen of Jupiter was not permitted to swear: of which law among other reasons he assigneth this: *Because*

* Οὐκ ὅρκος ἀξιόπιστον ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ βίου μαρτυρία, καὶ πολιτείας ἀκρίβεια, καὶ ὑπόληψις ἀγαθή· πολλοὶ πολλάκις διερράγησαν ὀμνύντες, καὶ οὐδένα ἔπεισαν· ἕτεροι δὲ, ἐπινεύσαντες μόνον, ἀξιοπιστότεροι τῶν τοσαῦτα ὀμωμοκότων ἠφάνησαν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. p. 514.

† Δεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας τρόπον ὅρκου πιστότερον φαίνεσθαι παρεχομένους.—Socr. apud Max. Serm. lxxxv.

Ὁ τοῦ σπουδαίου λόγος ὅρκος ἔστω βέβαιος, ἀκλινὴς, ἀψευδέστατος.—Philo.

Colendo fidem jurant (Scythæ; *apud Curt.* vii. 8.)

[n] Æschyl.

* Ἦν δὲ καὶ ἀξιόπιστος σφόδρα· ὥστε μὴ ἐξὸν ἀνώμοτον μαρτυρεῖν, τούτῳ μόνῳ συνεχώρουν Ἀθηναῖοι.—Diog. Laert. in Xenocr.

† Παῖν τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἰσχυρότερον ὅρκου, τὸ δὲ ὀμνύειν αὐτοῖς περιῆσται.—Joseph.

‡ Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes.— *Hier. Ep.* xiv.

§ Ὅρκος περὶ παντὸς ἀπέστω. Plat. apud Clem. Alex. Str. v. p. 438.

‖ Ὅρκον παραίτησον, εἰ μὲν δυνατόν τε, εἰς ἅπαν. Epict. Ench. cap. xliv.

¶ Ἕνεκα χρημάτων μηδένα θεὸν ὀμόσῃς, μηδ' ἂν εὐορκεῖν μέλλῃς. Isocr. ad Demon.

° Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 524.

*it is not handsome, that he, to whom divine and greatest things are entrusted, should be distrusted about small matters.**
The which reason may well be applied to excuse every Christian from it, who is a priest to the most High God, and hath the most celestial and important matters concredited to him; in comparison to which all other matters are very mean and inconsiderable. The dignity of his rank should render his word, *verbum honoris*, passable without any farther engagement. He hath opinions of things, he hath undertaken practices inconsistent with swearing. For he that firmly doth believe that God is ever present with him, an auditor and witness of all his discourse; he that is persuaded that a severe judgment shall pass on him, wherein he must *give an account for every idle word*[p] which slippeth from him, and wherein, among other offenders, assuredly *liars* will be condemned to the burning lake;[q] he that in a great sacrament (once most solemnly taken, and frequently renewed) hath engaged and sworn, together with all other Divine commandments, to observe those which most expressly do charge him to be exactly just, faithful, and veracious in all his words and deeds; who therefore should be ready to say with David, *I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgments;*[r] to him every word hath the force of an oath;† every lie, every breach of promise, every violation of faith, doth involve perjury: for him to swear, is false heraldry, an impertinent accumulation of one oath upon another: he of all men should disdain to allow that his words are not perfectly credible, that his promise is not secure, without being assured by an oath.

IX. Indeed the practice of swearing greatly disparageth him that useth it, and derogateth from his credit upon divers accounts.

It signifieth (if it signifieth any thing,) that he doth not confide in his own reputation, and judgeth his own bare word not to deserve credit: for why, if he taketh his word to be good, doth he back it with asseverations? why, if he deemeth his own honesty to bear proof, doth he cite Heaven to warrant it?

It is (saith St. Basil) *a very foul and silly thing for a man to accuse himself as unworthy of belief, and to proffer an oath for security.**

By so doing a man doth authorise others to distrust him: for it can be no wrong to distrust him, who doth not pretend to be a credible person, or that his saying alone may safely be taken; who, by suspecting that others are not satisfied with his simple assertion, implieth a reason known to himself for it.

It rendereth whatever he saith to be in reason suspicious, as discovering him void of conscience and discretion: for he that flatly, against the rules of duty and reason, will swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly?† He that is so loose in so clear and so considerable a point of obedience to God, how can he be supposed staunch in regard to any other? *It being* (as Aristotle hath it) *the part of the same man to do ill things, and not to regard forswearing.*‡ It will at least constrain any man to suspect all his discourse of vanity and unadvisedness, seeing he plainly hath no care to bridle his tongue from so gross an offence.

It is strange, therefore, that any man of honour or honesty should not scorn, by such a practice, to shake his own credit, or to detract from the validity of his word; which should stand firm on itself, and not want any attestation to support it. It is a privilege of honourable persons, that they are excused from swearing, and that their *verbum honoris* passeth in lieu of an oath: is it not then strange, that when others dispense with them, they should not dispense with themselves; but voluntarily degrade themselves, and with sin forfeit so noble a privilege?

* Διατὶ τῳ ἱερεῖ τοῦ Διὸς, οὐκ ἔξεστιν ὀμόσαι; ἢ ὅτι περὶ μικρῶν ἀπιστεῖσθαι τὸν τὰ θεῖα καὶ μέγιστα πεπιστευμένον οὐκ εἰκός ἐστιν; Plut. in Qu. Rom. p. 421.

† Omnis sermo fidelis pro jurejurando est.—*Hier.* in Matt. v.

[p] Matt. xii. 36. [q] Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 15.

[r] Col. iii. 9; Eph. iv. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 1; Psal. cxix. 106.

* Αἰσχρὸν παντελῶς καὶ ἀνόητον, ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖν ὡς ἀναξίου πίστεως, καὶ τὴν τῶν ὅρκων ἀσφάλειαν ἐπιφέρεσθαι.—Bas. in Psal. xiv.

† Ἤδη γὰρ ὅ γε ὀμνὺς εἰς ἀπιστίαν ὑπονοεῖται.—Philo.

‡ Τῶν αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπων τὰ πονηρὰ πράττειν, καὶ μὴ φροντίζειν ἐπιορκοῦντας. Arist. Rhet. ad Alex. cap. xviii.

X. To excuse these faults, the swearer will be forced to confess, that his oaths are no more than waste and insignificant words; deprecating being taken for serious, or to be understood that he meaneth any thing by them; but only that he useth them as expletive phrases, *πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου*,[a] to plump his speech, and fill up sentences. But such pleas do no more than suggest other faults of swearing, and good arguments against it; its impertinence, its abuse of speech, its disgracing the practiser of it in point of judgment and capacity. For so it is, oaths as they commonly pass are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing but encumber and deform it; they so embellish discourse, as a wen or a scab do beautify a face, as a patch or a spot do adorn a garment.

To what purpose, I pray, is God's name hooked and haled into our idle talk? why should we so often mention him, when we do not mean any thing about him? Would it not, into every sentence to foist a dog or a horse (to intrude Turkish, or any barbarous gibberish), be altogether as proper and pertinent?

What do these superfluities signify, but that the venter of them doth little skill the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to sputter and prate any thing without judgment or wit; that his invention is very barren, his fancy beggarly, craving the aid of any stuff to relieve it? One would think a man of sense should grudge to lend his ear or incline his attention to such motley ragged discourse; that without nauseating, he scarce should endure to observe men lavishing time, and squandering their breath so frivolously. It is an affront to good company to pester it with such talk.

XI. But farther, upon higher accounts this is a very uncivil and unmannerly practice.

Some vain persons take it for a genteel and graceful thing, a special accomplishment, a mark of fine breeding, a point of high gallantry: for who, forsooth, is the brave spark, the complete gentleman, the man of conversation and address, but he that hath the skill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a skill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every sentence with an oath or a curse; making bold at every turn to salute his Maker, or to summon him in attestation of his tattle; not to say, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and destroy him? Such a conceit, I say, too many have of swearing, because a custom thereof, together with divers other fond and base qualities, hath prevailed among some people, bearing the name and garb of gentlemen.

But in truth there is no practice more crossing the genuine nature of genteelness, or misbecoming persons well born and well bred; who should excel the rude vulgar in goodness, in courtesey, in nobleness of heart, in unwillingness to offend, and readiness to oblige those with whom they converse, in steady composedness of mind and manners, in disdaining to say or do any unworthy, any unhandsome things.

For this practice is not only a gross rudeness toward the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of God, and detest such an abuse thereof; not only, farther, an insolent defiance of the common profession, the religion, the law of our country, which disalloweth and condemneth it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society or company, at least wherein there is any sober person, any who retaineth a sense of goodness, or is any wise concerned for God's honour: for to any such person no language can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate his ears, or fret his heart, than to hear the sovereign object of his love and esteem so mocked and slighted; to see the law of his Prince so disloyally infringed, so contemptuously trampled on; to find his best Friend and Benefactor so outrageously abused. To give him the lie, were a compliment; to spit in his face, were an obligation, in comparison to this usage.

Wherefore it is a wonder, that any person of rank, any that hath in him a spark of ingenuity, or doth at all pretend to good manners, should find in his heart, or deign to comply with so scurvy a fashion; a fashion much more befitting the scum of the people, than the flower of the gentry; yea, rather much below any man endued with a scrap of reason, or a grain of goodness. Would we bethink ourselves, mod-

[a] Hierocl. Philo.

est, sober, and pertinent discourse would appear far more generous and masculine, than such mad hectoring the Almighty, such boisterous insulting over the received laws and general notions of mankind, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors, the founders of their quality; that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which advanced their families. and severed them from the vulgar; this degenerate wantonness and sordidness of language would return to the dunghill, or rather, which God grant, be quite banished from the world; the vulgar following their example.

XII. Farther, the words of our Lord, when he forbad this practice, do suggest another consideration against it, deducible from the causes and sources of it; from whence it cometh, that men are so inclined or addicted thereto: *Let* (saith he) *your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*[t] The roots of it he assureth us are evil, and therefore the fruit cannot be good: it is no grape which groweth from thorns, or fig from thistles. Consult experience, and observe whence it doth proceed.

Sometimes it ariseth from exorbitant heats of spirit, or transports of unbridled passion. When a man is keenly peevish, or fiercely angry, or eagerly contentious, then he blustereth, and dischargeth his choler in most tragical strains; then he would fright the objects of his displeasure by the most violent expressions thereof. This is sometimes alleged in excuse of rash swearing; *I was provoked*, the swearer will say, *I was in passion:* but it is strange that a bad cause should justify a bad effect; that one crime should warrant another; that what would spoil a good action should excuse a bad one.

Sometimes it proceedeth from arrogant conceit, and a tyrannical humour; when a man fondly admireth his own opinion, and affecting to impose it on others, is thence moved to thwack it on with lusty asseverations.

Sometimes it issueth from wantonness and levity of mind, disposing a man to sport with any thing, how serious, how grave, how sacred and venerable soever.[u]

Sometimes its rise is from stupid inadvertency, or heady precipitancy; when the man doth not heed what he saith, or consider the nature and consequence of his words, but snatcheth any expression which cometh next, or which his roving fancy doth offer; for want of that caution of the Psalmist, *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*[v]

Sometimes (alas! how often in this miserable age!) it doth spring from profane boldness; when men design to put affronts on religion, and to display their scorn and spite against conscience; affecting the reputation of stout blades, of gallant hectors, of resolute giants, who dare do any thing, who are not afraid to defy heaven, and brave God Almighty himself.

Sometimes it is derived from apish imitation, or a humour to comply with a fashion current among vain and dissolute persons.[w]

It always doth come from a great defect of conscience, of reverence to God, of love to goodness, of discretion and sober regard to the welfare of a man's soul.

From such evidently vicious and unworthy sources it proceedeth, and therefore must needs be very culpable. No good, no wise man, can like actions drawn from such principles.[x] Farther,

XIII. This offence may be particularly aggravated by considering, that it hath no strong temptation alluring to it; that it yieldeth no sensible advantage; that it most easily may be avoided or corrected.

Every sin (saith St. Chrysostom) *hath not the same punishment; but those things which may easily be reformed do bring on us greater punishments;** and what can be more easy than to reform this fault? *Tell me* (saith he) *what difficulty, what sweat, what art, what hazard, what more doth it require, beside a little care,*† to abstain wholly from it? It is but willing, or resolving on it, and it is

[t] Matt. v. 37.

* Οὐ γὰρ δὴ πᾶν ἁμάρτημα τὴν αὐτὴν φέρει κόλασιν. ἀλλὰ τὰ εὐκατόρθωτα μείζονα ἡμῖν ἐπάγει τὴν τιμωρίαν. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ἐ p. 531.

† Εἶπε μοι ποίαν δυσκολίαν, &c. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιθ'. p. 594. ἑ. p. 499. δ'. p. 489.

[u] Ελαφρία. 2 Cor. i. 17.

[v] Psal. xxxix. 1; cxli. 3.

[w] (Psal. xxvi. 4.)

[x] Matt. vii. 16.

instantly done: for there is not any natural inclination disposing to it, any strong appetite to detain us under its power.

It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour; for the sound of it is not very melodious, and no man surely did ever get an estate by it, or was preferred to dignity for it. It rather to any good ear maketh a horrid and jarring noise; it rather with the best part of the world produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. What, therefore, besides monstrous vanity, and unaccountable perverseness, should hold men so devoted thereto?

Surely, of all dealers in sin the swearer is palpably the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the Prophet, *selleth his soul for nothing.*[y] An epicure hath some reason to allege; an extortioner is a man of wisdom, and acteth prudently in comparison to him; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some gain here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter: but this fondling offendeth heaven, and abandoneth happiness, he knoweth not why or for what. He hath not so much as the common plea of human infirmity to excuse him; he can hardly say that he was tempted thereto by any bait?*

A fantastic humour possesseth him, of spurning at piety and soberness; he inconsiderately followeth a herd of wild fops; he affecteth to play the ape. What more than this can he say for himself?

XIV. Finally, let us consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to glorify our Maker (the which to do is indeed the greatest perfection and noblest privilege of our nature;) so our tongue and speaking faculty were given to us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to exhibit our due love and gratitude toward him, to profess our trust and confidence in him, to celebrate his praises, to avow his benefits, to address our supplications to him, to maintain all kinds of devotional intercourse with him, to propagate our knowledge, fear, love, and obedience to him, in all such ways to promote his honour and service. This is the most proper, worthy, and due use of our tongue, for which it was created, to which it is dedicated, from whence it becometh, as it is so often styled, our *glory*, and the best member that we have;[z] that whereby we excel all creatures here below, and whereby we are no less discriminated from them than by our reason; that whereby we consort with the blessed angels above in the distinct utterance of praise, and communication of glory to our Creator.* Wherefore, applying this to any impious discourse, with this to profane God's blessed name, with this to violate his most holy commands, with this to unhallow his sacred ordinance, with this to offer dishonour and indignity to him, is a most unnatural abuse, a horrid ingratitude toward him.

It is that indeed whereby we render this noble organ incapable of any good use. For how (as the excellent Father doth often urge) can we pray to God for mercies, or praise God for his benefits, or heartily confess our sins, or cheerfully partake of the holy mysteries, with a mouth defiled by impious oaths, with a heart guilty of so heinous disobedience?†

Likewise, whereas a secondary, very worthy use of our speech, is to promote the good of our neighbour, and especially to edify him in piety, according to that wholesome precept of the Apostle, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers;*[a] the practice of swearing is an abuse very contrary to that good purpose, serving to corrupt our neighbour, and to instil into him a contempt of religion; or, however, grievously to scandalize him.

XV. I shall add but two words more. One is, that we would seriously consider, that our blessed Saviour, who loved us

* Οὗτος δὲ, οὐδεμιᾶς ἀνάγκης αὐτὸν βιαζομένης, ὑπὸ ἀνοίας μόνης εἰς τὸ βάραθρον καταπίπτει τῆς ἁμαρτίας. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ί. p. 531. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτοί τινα πρόφασιν ἔχουσι προβουλίσθαι, ἀλλὰ καταφρόνησιν μόνον. Ibid.

[y] Isa. lii. 3.

* Hoc enim uno præstamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, et quod exprimere dicendo sensa possumus. *Cic. de* Orat. i.

† Πῶς εὐξόμεθα—; Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. p. 559 ια' p. 538.

[z] Psal. xvi. 9; xxx. 12; lvii. 8; cviii. 1.

[a] Eph. iv. 29.

so dearly, who died and suffered so much for us, who redeemed us by his blood, who said unto us, *If ye love me, keep my commandments*,[b] he thus positively hath enjoined: *But I say unto you, Swear not at all*:[c] and how then can we find in our heart directly to thwart his word?

The other is, that we would lay to heart the reason whereby St. James doth enforce the point, and the sting in the close of our text, wherewith I conclude: *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation*,[d] or, *lest ye fall under damnation*.* From the which infinite mischief, and from all sin that may cause it, God in mercy deliver us, through our blessed Redeemer Jesus, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.

SERMON XVI.

OF EVIL-SPEAKING IN GENERAL.

TITUS iii. 2.—*To speak evil of no man.*

THESE words do imply a double duty; one incumbent on teachers, another on the people who are to be instructed by them.

The teacher's duty appeareth from reflecting on the words of the context, which govern these, and make them up an entire sentence:† *Put them in mind*, or, rub up their memory to do thus. It is St. Paul's injunction to Titus, a bishop and pastor of the Church, that he should admonish the people committed to his care and instruction, as of other great duties (of yielding obedience to magistrates, of behaving themselves peaceably, of practising meekness and equity toward all men, of being *readily* disposed *to every good work*), so particularly of this, μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, *to revile*, or *speak evil of no man*.

Whence it is apparent, that this is one of the principal duties that preachers are obliged to mind people of, and to press upon them. And if this were needful then, when charity, kindled by such instructions and examples, was so lively; when Christians, by their sufferings, were so inured to meekness and patience; even every one, for the honour of his religion, and the safety of his person, was concerned in all respects to demean himself innocently and inoffensively; then is it now especially requisite, when (such engagement and restraints being taken off, love being cooled, persecution being extinct, the tongue being set loose from all extraordinary curbs) the transgression of this duty is grown so prevalent and rife, that evil-speaking is almost as common as speaking, ordinary conversation extremely abounding therewith, that ministers should discharge their office in dehorting and dissuading from it.

Well indeed it were, if by their example of using mild and moderate discourse, of abstaining from virulent invectives, tauntings and scoffings, good for little but to inflame anger, and to infuse ill-will, they would lead men to good practice of this sort: for no examples can be so wholesome or so mischievous to this purpose, as those which come down from the pulpit, the place of edification, backed with special authority and advantage.

However, it is to preachers a ground of assurance, and matter of satisfaction, that in pressing this duty they shall perform their duty: their text being not so much of their own choosing, as given them by St. Paul; they can surely scarce find a better to discourse upon: it cannot be a matter of small moment or use, which this great master and guide so expressly directeth us to insist upon. And to the observance of his precept, so far as concerneth me, I shall immediately apply myself. It is, then, the duty of all Christian people (to be taught and pressed on them) *not to reproach*, or *speak evil of any man*. The which duty, for your instruction, I shall first endeavour somewhat to explain, declaring its import and extent; then, for your farther edification, I shall inculcate it, proposing several inducements persuasive to the observance of it.

I. For explication, we may first consider the object of it, *no man*; then the act itself which is prohibited, *to blas-*

* μὴ ὑπὸ κρισιν πέσητε.
† Ὑπομίμνησκε αὐτούς.
[b] John xiv. 15. [c] Matt. v. 34.
[d] James v. 12.

pheme, that, is, to reproach, to revile, or, as we have it rendered, *to speak evil.*

No man. St. Paul questionless did especially mean hereby to hinder the Christians at that time from reproaching the Jews and the Pagans among whom they lived, men in their lives very wicked and corrupt, men in opinion extremely dissenting from them, men who greatly did hate, and cruelly did persecute them; of whom therefore they had mighty provocations and temptations to speak ill; their judgment of the persons, and their resentment of injuries, making it difficult to abstain from doing so. Whence by a manifest analogy may be inferred, that the object of the duty is very large, indeed universal and unlimited: that we must forbear reproach not only against pious and virtuous persons, against persons of our own judgment or party, against those who never did harm or offend us, against our relations, our friends, our benefactors; in respect of whom there is no ground or temptation of ill speaking; but even against the most unworthy and wicked persons, against those who most discoast in opinion and practice from us, against those who never did oblige us, yea, those who have most disobliged us, even against our most bitter and spiteful enemies. There is no exception or excuse to be admitted from the quality, state, relation, or demeanour of men: the duty (according to the proper sense, or due qualifications and limits of the act) doth extend to all men: for, *Speak evil of no man.*

As for the act it may be inquired what the word βλασφημεῖν, *to blaspheme*, doth import. I answer, that it is to vent words concerning any person which do signify in us ill opinion, or contempt, anger, hatred, enmity conceived in our mind toward him; which are apt in him to kindle wrath, and breed ill blood toward us; which tend to beget in others that hear ill conceit, or ill-will toward him; which are much destructive of his reputation, prejudicial to his interests, productive of damage or mischief to him. It is otherwise in Scripture termed λοιδορεῖν, *to rail* or *revile* (to use bitter and ignominious language;) ὑβρίζειν, *to speak contumeliously;* φέρειν βλάσφημον κρίσιν, *to bring railing accusation* (or reproachful censure;) καταλαλεῖν, to use *obloquy, or obtrectation;* καταρᾶσθαι, *to curse*, that is, to speak words importing that we do wish ill to a person.[e]

Such is the language we are prohibited to use. To which purpose we may observe, that whereas in our conversation and commerce with men, there do frequently occur occasions to speak of men, and to men, words apparently disadvantageous to them, expressing our dissent in opinion from them, or a dislike in us of their proceedings, we may do this in different ways and terms; some of them gentle and moderate, signifying no ill mind or disaffection toward them; others harsh and sharp, arguing height of disdain, disgust, or despite, whereby we bid them defiance, and show that we mean to exasperate them. Thus, telling a man that we differ in judgment from him, or conceive him not to be in the right, and calling him a liar, a deceiver, a fool; saying that he doeth amiss, taketh a wrong course, transgresseth the rule, and calling him dishonest, unjust, wicked (to omit more odious and provoking names, unbecoming this place, and not deserving our notice;) are several ways of expressing the same things: whereof the latter, in relating passages concerning our neighbour, or in debating cases with him, is prohibited: for thus the words *reproaching*, *reviling*, *railing*, *cursing*,[f] and the like, do signify; and thus our Lord himself doth explain them, in his divine sermon, wherein he doth enact this law: *Whosoever* (saith he) *shall say to his brother Raca* (that is, vain man, or liar), *shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire;*[g] that is, he rendereth himself liable to a strict account, and to severe condemnation before God, who useth contemptuous and contumelious expressions toward his neighbour, in proportion to the malignity of such expressions.

The reason of things also doth help to explain those words, and to show why they are prohibited: because those harsh terms are needless; mild words serving as well to express the same things: because they are commonly unjust, loading

[e] Luke xi. 45; 2 Pet. ii. 11; Jude 9; James iv. 11; Rom. xii. 14; Luke vi. 28; (2 Sam. xvi. 10.)

[f] (Acts xxii. 3, 4, 5.) [g] Matt. v. 22.

men with greater defect or blame than they can be proved to deserve, or their actions do import (for every man that speaketh falsehood is not therefore a liar, every man that erreth is not thence a fool, every man that doeth amiss is not consequently dishonest or wicked; the secret intentions and the habitual dispositions of men not being always to be collected from their outward actions:) because they are uncharitable, signifying that we entertain the worst opinions of men, and make the worst construction of their doings, and are disposed to show them no favour or kindness: because also they produce mischievous effects, such as spring from the worst passions raised by them.

This in gross is the meaning of the precept. But since there are some other precepts seeming to clash with this; since there are cases wherein we are allowed to use the harsher sort of terms, there are great examples in appearance thwarting this rule; therefore it may be requisite for determining the limits of our duty, and distinguishing it from transgression, that such exceptions or restrictions should be somewhat declared.

1. First, then, we may observe, that it may be allowable to persons anywise concerned in the prosecution or administration of justice, to speak words which in private intercourse would be reproachful. A witness may impeach of crimes hurtful to justice, or public tranquillity; a judge may challenge, may rebuke, may condemn an offender in proper terms (or forms of speech prescribed by law), although most disgraceful and distasteful to the guilty: for it belongeth to the majesty of public justice to be bold, blunt, severe; little regarding the concerns or passions of particular persons, in comparison to the public welfare.

A testimony, therefore, or sentence against a criminal, which materially is a reproach, and morally would be such in a private mouth, is not yet formally so according to the intent of this rule. For practices of this kind, which serve the exigencies of justice, are not to be interpreted as proceeding from anger, hatred, revenge, any bad passion or humour; but in way of needful discipline for God's service, and common benefit of men. It is not indeed so much the minister of justice, as God himself, our absolute Lord, as the Sovereign, God's representative, acting in the public behalf, as the commonwealth itself, who by his mouth do rebuke the obnoxious person.

2. God's ministers in religious affairs, to whom the care of men's instruction and edification is committed, are enabled to inveigh against sin and vice, whoever consequentially may be touched thereby; yea, sometimes it is their duty, with severity and sharpness to reprove particular persons, not only privately, but publicly, in order to their correction, and edification of others.

Thus St. Paul directeth Timothy: *Them that sin* (notoriously and scandalously he meaneth) *rebuke before all, that others may fear:*[h] that is, in a manner apt to make impression on the minds of the hearers, so as to scare them from like offences. And to Titus he writes, *Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.* And, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins*, saith the Lord to the Prophet.[i] Such are the charges and commissions laid on and granted to his messengers.

Thus may we observe that God's Prophets of old, St. John the Baptist, our Lord himself, the holy Apostles, did in terms most vehement and biting reprove the age in which they lived, and some particular persons in them.[j] The Prophets are full of declamations and invectives against the general corruption of their times, and against the particular manners of some persons in them. *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men; and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their means. As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by*

[h] 1 Tim. v. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2.
[i] Tit. i. 13; Isa. lviii. 1.
[j] *Vide* Hier. in Pelag. i. 9.

consent, and commit lewdness.[k] Such is their style commonly. St. John the Baptist calleth the Scribes and Pharisees *a generation of vipers.*[l] Our Saviour speaketh of them in the same terms; calleth them an *evil and adulterous generation, serpents, and children of vipers; hypocrites, painted sepulchres, obscure graves* (*μνημεῖα ἀδηλα,*) *blind guides, fools and blind, children of the devil.*[m] St. Paul likewise calleth the schismatical and heretical teachers, *dogs, false apostles, evil and deceitful workers, men of corrupt minds, reprobates and abominable.*[n] With the like colours do St. Peter, St. Jude, and the other Apostles, paint them. Which sort of speeches are to be supposed to proceed, not from private passion or design, but out of holy zeal for God's honour, and from earnest charity toward men, for to work their amendment and common edification. They were uttered also by special wisdom and peculiar order; from God's authority and in his name: so that as God by them is said to preach, to entreat, to warn, and to exhort; so by them also he may be said to reprehend and reproach.

3. Even private persons in due season, with discretion and temper, may reprove others, whom they observe to commit sin, or follow bad courses, out of charitable design, and with hope to reclaim them. This was an office of charity imposed anciently even upon the Jews; much more doth it lie upon Christians, who are obliged more earnestly to tender the spiritual good of those who by the stricter and more holy bands of brotherhood are allied to them. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him,*[o] was a precept of the old law: and, *νουθετεῖν ἀτάκτους, to admonish the disorderly,*[p] is an evangelical rule. Such persons we are enjoined to shun and decline: but first we must endeavour by sober advice and admonition to reclaim them; we must not thus reject them till they appear contumacious and incorrigible, refusing to hear us, or becoming deaf to reproof.[q] This, although it necessarily doth include setting out their faults and charging blame on them (answerable to their offences), is not the culpable reproach here meant, it being needful toward a wholesome effect, and proceeding from charitable intention.

4. Some vehemency (some smartness and sharpness) of speech may sometimes be used in defence of truth, and impugning errors of bad consequence; especially when it concerneth the interests of truth, that the reputation and authority of its adversaries should somewhat be abased or abated. If by a partial opinion or reverence toward them, however begotten in the minds of men, they strive to overbear or discountenance a good cause, their faults, so far as truth permitteth and need requireth, may be detected and displayed. For this cause particularly may we presume our Lord (otherwise so meek in his temper, and mild in his carriage toward all men) did characterize the Jewish Scribes in such terms, that their authority (being then so prevalent with the people) might not prejudice the truth, and hinder the efficacy of his doctrine. This is part of that *ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ πίστει*, the duty of *contending earnestly for the faith,*[r] which is incumbent on us.

5. It may be excusable upon particular emergent occasions, with some heat of language to express dislike of notorious wickedness. As our Lord doth against the perverse incredulity and stupidity in the Pharisees, their profane misconstruction of his words and actions, their malicious opposing truth, and obstructing his endeavours in God's service.[s] As St. Peter did to Simon Magus, telling him, that he *was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*[t] As St. Paul to Elymas the sorcerer, when he *withstood him, and desired to turn away the deputy, Sergius, from the faith: O* (saith he, stirred with a holy zeal and indignation) *thou full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all*

[k] Isa. i. 4; Jer. ix. 2, 3; Isa. i. 23; Hos. ix. 15; Ezek. xxii. 6, 27; Jer. v. 31; xiv. 14; Hos. vi. 9; Ezek. xxii. 26; Mic. iii. 11; Zeph. iii. 4.

[l] Matt. iii. 7.

[m] Matt. xvi. 4; xii. 34, 39; xxiii. 13, &c.; xv. 7, 14; xvi. 3; xxii. 18; Luke xii. 1; xi. 44; Matt. xxiii. 24, 17; John viii. 44.

[n] Phil. iii. 2; 2 Cor. xi. 13; 1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Tit. i. 16; 2 Cor. v. 20; Col. i. 28.

[o] Levit. xix. 17.

[p] 1 Thess. v. 14.

[q] 1 Tim. vi. 5; Rom. xvi. 17; Tit. iii. 10; 2 Thess. iii. 6; Matt. xviii. 17.

[r] Jude 3.

[s] Matt. xvii. 17.

[t] Acts viii. 23.

righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?[u] The same spirit, which enabled him to inflict a sore punishment on that wicked wretch, did prompt him to use that sharp language toward him; unquestionably deserved, and seasonably pronounced. As also, when the High Priest commanded him illegally and unjustly to be misused, that speech from a mind justly sensible of such outrage broke forth, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.*[v] So, when St. Peter presumptuously would have dissuaded our Lord from compliance with God's will in undergoing those crosses which were appointed to him by God's decree, our Lord calleth him Satan:— Ὑπαγε Σατανᾶ, *Avaunt, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that are of men.*[w]

These sort of speeches, issuing from just and honest indignation, are sometimes excusable, oftentimes commendable; especially when they come from persons eminent in authority, of notable integrity, endued with special measures of divine grace, of wisdom, of goodness; such as cannot be suspected of intemperate anger, of ill nature, of ill will, or of ill design.

In such cases as are above mentioned, a sort of *evil-speaking* about our neighbour may be allowable or excusable. But for fear of overdoing, great caution and temper is to be used; and we should never apply any such limitations as cloaks to palliate unjust or uncharitable dealing. Generally it is more advisable to suppress such eruptions of passion, than to vent it; for seldom passion hath not inordinate motions joined with it, or tendeth to good ends. And, however, it will do well to reflect on those cases, and to remark some particulars about them.

First, we may observe, that in all these cases all possible moderation, equity, and candour are to be used; so that no ill-speaking be practised beyond what is needful or convenient. Even in prosecution of offences, the bounds of truth, of equity, of humanity and clemency, are not to be transgressed. A judge must not lay on the most criminal person more blame, or contumely, than the case will bear, or than serveth the designs of justice. However our neighbour doth incur the calamities of sin and of punishment, we must not be insolent or contemptuous toward him. So we may learn by that law of Moses, backed with a notable reason: *And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed; lest if he should exceed, and beat him above those stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.*[x] Whence it appears, that we should be careful of not vilifying an offender beyond measure. And how mildly governors should proceed in the administration of justice, the example of Joshua may teach us, who thus examineth Achan, the cause of so great mischief to the public: *My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me.*[y] *My son;* what compellation could be more benign and kind? *I pray thee;* what language could be more courteous and gentle? *Give glory to God, and make confession;* what words could be more inoffensively pertinent? And when he sentenced that great Malefactor, the cause of so much mischief, this was all he said: *Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord will trouble thee;* words void of contumely or insulting, containing only a close intimation of the cause, and a simple declaration of the event he was to undergo.

Secondly, Likewise ministers, in the taxing sin and sinners, are to proceed with great discretion and caution, with much gentleness and meekness; signifying a tender pity of their infirmities, charitable desires of their good, the best opinion of them, and the best hopes for them, that may consist with any reason; according to those apostolical rules: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted:*[z] and, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves:*[a] and more expressly,

[u] Acts xiii. 8, 10. [v] Acts xxiii. 3.
[w] Matt. xvi. 23.
[x] Deut. xxv. 2, 3. [y] Josh. vii. 19, 25.
[z] Gal. vi. 1. [a] Rom. xv. 1.

A servant of the Lord must not fight, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.[b] Thus did St. Peter temper his reproof of Simon Magus with this wholesome and comfortable advice: *Repent therefore from this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*[c]

Thirdly, As for fraternal corruption, and reproof of faults, when it is just and expedient to use it, ordinarily the calmest* and mildest way is the most proper, and most likely to obtain good success: it commonly doth in a more kindly manner convey the sense thereof into the heart, and therein more powerfully worketh remorse, than the fierce and harsh way.[d] Clearly to show a man his fault, with the reason proving it such, so that he becometh thoroughly convinced of it, is sufficient to breed in him regret, and to shame him before his own mind: to do more (in way of aggravation, of insulting on him, of inveighing against him), as it doth often not well consist with humanity, so it is seldom consonant to discretion, if we do, as we ought, seek his health and amendment.† Humanity requireth, that when we undertake to reform our neighbour, we should take care not to deform him (not to discourage or displease him more than is necessary;) when we would correct his manners, that we should also consider his modesty, and consult his reputation: *Curam agentes* (as Seneca speaketh), *non tantum salutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis:*‡ *having care not only to heal the wound, but to leave a comely scar behind. Be* (adviseth St. Austin) *so displeased with iniquity, as to consider and consult humanity:*§ for, *Zeal void of humanity is not* (saith St. Chrysostom) *zeal, but rather animosity; and reproof not mixed with good will, appeareth a kind of malignity.** We should so rebuke those who, by frailty or folly incident to mankind, have fallen into misdemeanours, that they may perceive we do sincerely pity their ill case, and tender their good; that we mean not to upbraid their weakness, or insult upon their misfortune; that we delight not to inflict on them more grief than is plainly needful and unavoidable; that we are conscious and sensible of our own obnoxiousness to the like slips or falls, and do *consider that we also may be tempted*,[e] and being tempted may be overborne. This they cannot perceive, or be persuaded of, except we temper our speech with benignity and mildness. Such speech prudence also dictateth, as most useful and hopeful for producing the good ends honest reprehension doth aim at; it mollifieth and it melteth a stubborn heart, it subdueth and winneth a perverse will, it healeth distempered affections.[f] Whereas roughly handling is apt to defeat or obstruct the cure; rubbing the sore doth tend to exasperate and inflame it. Harsh speech rendereth advice odious and unsavoury; driveth from it, and depriveth it of efficacy: it turneth regret for a fault into displeasure and disdain against the reprover: it looks not like the dealing of a kind friend, but like the persecution of a spiteful enemy;†‡ it seemeth rather an ebullition of gall, or a defluxion from rancour, than an expression of good will: the offender will take it for a needless and pitiless tormenting, or for a proud and tyrannical domineering over him. He that can bear a friendly touch, will not endure to be lashed with angry and reproachful words. In fine, all reproof ought to be seasoned with discretion, with candour, with moderation and meekness.

Fourthly, Likewise in defence of truth, and maintenance of a good cause, we may observe, that commonly the fairest

* Reprehensio contumelia vacare debet. Neque monitio aspera sit, nec objurgatio contumeliosa.—*Ambros. de Offic.* iii. 16.

† Ὁ ὁδηγός, ὅταν λίθῳ τινὶ πλανώμενον, ἤγαγεν ἐπὶ ὁδὸν τὴν δέουσαν· οὐχὶ καταγελάσας ἢ λοιδορησάμενος ἀπῆλθε· καὶ σὺ δεῖξον αὐτῷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ δψει ὅτι ἀκολουθεῖ, &c.—Epict. ii. 12.

‡ Sen. de Clem. i. 7. *Vide* Chrys. in Matt. ix. 8, Or. 29.

§ Ita succense iniquitati, ut consulere memineris humanitatis.—*Aug.*

[b] 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. [c] Acts viii. 22.

[d] Prov. xvii. 10,—A reproof entereth more into a wise man, than a hundred stripes into a fool.

* Ζῆλος φιγανθρωπίας κενὸς, οὐ ζῆλος, &c.

† Μὴ ὡς ἐχθρον ἡγεῖσθε, ἀλλὰ νουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφον.

[e] Gal. vi. 1.

[f] Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.—Prov. xvi. 24. A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.—Prov. xv. 1.

‡ 2 Thess. iii. 15.

language is most proper and advantageous, and that reproachful or foul terms are most improper and prejudicial. A calm and meek way of discoursing doth much advantage a good cause, as arguing the patron thereof to have confidence in the cause itself, and to rely upon his strength; that he is in a temper fit to apprehend it himself, and to maintain it; that he propoundeth it as a friend, wishing the hearer for his own good to follow it, leaving him the liberty to judge and choose for himself. But rude speech, and contemptuous reflections on persons, as they do signify nothing to the question, so they commonly bring much disadvantage and damage to the cause, creating mighty prejudices against it:* they argue much impotency in the advocate, and consequently little strength in what he maintains; that he is little able to judge well, and altogether unapt to teach others: they intimate a diffidence in himself concerning his cause, and that, despairing to maintain it by reason, he seeks to uphold it by passion; that, not being able to convince by fair means, he would bear down by noise and clamour; that, not skilling to get his suit quietly, would extort it by force, obtruding his conceits violently as an enemy, or imposing them arbitrarily as a tyrant. Thus doth he really disparage and slur his cause, however good and defensible in itself.†

A modest and friendly style doth suit truth; it, like its author, doth usually reside (not in the rumbling *wind*, nor in the shaking *earthquake*, nor in the raging *fire*, but) in *the small still voice*;[h] sounding in this, it is most audible, most penetrant, and most effectual: thus propounded, it is willingly hearkened to; for men have no aversion from hearing those who seem to love them, and wish them well. It is easily conceived; no prejudice or passion clouding the apprehensive faculties: it is readily embraced; no animosity withstanding or obstructing it. It is *the sweetness of the lips*, which, as the Wise Man telleth us, *increaseth learning*;[i] disposing a man to hear lessons of good doctrine, rendering him capable to understand them, insinuating and impressing them upon the mind: the affections being thereby unlocked, the passage becomes open to the reason.*

But it is plainly a very preposterous method of instructing, of deciding controversies, of begetting peace, to vex and anger those concerned by ill language.† Nothing surely doth more hinder the efficacy of discourse, and prevent conviction, than doth this course, upon many obvious accounts. It doth first put in a strong bar to attention: for no man willingly doth afford an ear to him, whom he conceiveth disaffected toward him; which opinion harsh words infallibly will produce: no man can expect to hear truth from him, whom he apprehendeth disordered in his own mind, whom he seeth rude in his proceedings, whom he taketh to be unjust in his dealing; as men certainly will take those to be, who presume to revile others for using their own judgment freely, and dissenting from them in opinion. Again, this course doth blind the hearer's mind, so that he cannot discern what he that pretends to instruct him doth mean, or how he doth assert his doctrine. Truth will not be discerned through the smoke of wrathful expressions; right being defaced by foul language will not appear; passion being excited will not suffer a man to perceive the sense, or the force of an argument. The will also thereby is hardened and hindered from submitting to truth. In such a case, *non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris:* although you stop his mouth, you cannot subdue his heart; although

* Qui, dum dicit, malus videtur, utique male dicit.—*Quint.* vi. 2.

Nisi quod imperitos etiam animosos atque iracundos esse manifestum est, dum per inopiam concilii et sermonis ad iracundiam facile vertuntur.—*Firmil. apud Cyp.* Ep. 75.

† ——— et inhumanum est, et ipsi qui dicit inutile; tum causæ contrarium, quia plane et adversarii, fiunt et inimici; et quantulumcunque his virium est, contumelia augetur.—*Quint.* xii. 9.

[h] 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

* Δεῖ γὰρ τὸν μέλλοντά τι τῶν χρησίμων μαθεῖν, πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἡδέως ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν διδάσκοντα· — ἡδέως δὲ οὐκ ἄν τις σχοίη πρὸς τὸν θρασυνόμενον καὶ τὸν ὑβρίζοντα.—Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or. 6.

† Ὃν ἴσως ἐκέρδησας ἂν τῃ χρηστότητι, τοῦτον ἀπολλύεις τῃ θρασύτητι.—Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

Οὐ γὰρ ἀπαιδεύτως παιδεύομεν, οὐδὲ ταῖς ὕβρεσι βάλλομεν, ὅπερ πάσχουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ, μὴ τῷ λόγῳ μαχόμενοι, τοῖς δὲ λέγουσι, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν ἐστιν ὅτε τῶν λογισμῶν ταῖς ὕβρεσι συγκαλύπτοντες.—Naz. Or. 32.

Ὅταν πρός τινα ἀηδῶς ἔχωμεν, κ ν ὑγιές τι λέγῃ, οὐ προθύμως οὐδὲ μεθ' ἡδονῆς δεχόμεθα τὰ λεγόμενα.—Chrys. Tom. v. Or. 59.

[i] Prov. xvi. 21.

he can no longer fight, yet he never will yield: animosity raised by such usage rendereth him invincibly obstinate in his conceits and courses. Briefly, from this proceeding men become unwilling to mark, unfit to apprehend, indisposed to embrace any good instruction or advice: it maketh them indocile and intractable, averse from better instruction, pertinacious in their opinions, and refractory in their ways.

Every man (saith the Wise Man) *shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer*:[j] but no man surely will be ready to kiss those lips which are embittered with reproach, or defiled with dirty language.

It is said of Pericles, that *with thundering and lightning he put Greece into confusion*:* such discourse may serve to confound things, it seldom tendeth to compose them. If reason will not pierce, rage will scarce avail to drive it in.† Satirical virulency may vex men sorely, but it hardly ever soundly converts them. *Few become wiser or better by ill words.* Children may be frighted into compliance by loud and severe increpations; but men are to be allured by rational persuasion backed with courteous usage: they may be sweetly drawn, they cannot be violently driven to change their judgment and practice. Whence that advice of the Apostle, *With meekness instruct those that oppose themselves*,[k] doth no less savour of wisdom than of goodness.

Fifthly, As for the examples of extraordinary persons, which in some cases do seem to authorize the practice of evil-speaking, we may consider, that as they had especial commission enabling them to do some things beyond ordinary standing rules, wherein they are not to be imitated: as they had especial illumination and direction, which preserved them from swerving in particular cases from truth and equity; so the tenor of their life did evidence, that it was the glory of God, the good of men, the necessity of the case, which moved them to it.‡ And of them also we may observe, that in divers occasions, yea generally, whenever only their private credit or interest were concerned, although grievously provoked, they did out of meekness, patience, and charity, wholly forbear reproachful speech. Our Saviour, who sometimes upon special reason in his discourses used such harsh words, yet, when he was most spitefully accused, reproached, and persecuted, *did not open his mouth*, or return one angry word: *Being reviled, he did not* (as St. Peter, proposing his example to us, telleth us) *revile again; suffering, he did not threaten.*[l] He used the softest language to Judas, to the soldiers, to Pilate and Herod; to the priests, &c. And the Apostles, who sometimes inveigh so zealously against the opposers and perverters of truth, did in their private conversation and demeanour strictly observe their own rules of abstinence from reproach: *Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it*;[m] so doth St. Paul represent their practice. And in reason we should rather follow them in this their ordinary course, than in their extraordinary sallies of practice.

In fine, however in some cases and circumstances the matter may admit such exceptions, so that all language disgraceful to our neighbour is not ever culpable; yet the cases are so few and rare in comparison, the practice commonly so dangerous and ticklish, that worthily forbearing to reproach, doth bear the style of a general rule: and particularly, for clearer direction, we are in the following cases obliged carefully to shun it; or in speaking about our neighbour we must observe these cautions:—

1. We should never in severe terms inveigh against any man without reasonable warrant, or presuming upon a good call and commission thereto. As every man should not assume to himself the power of administering justice (of trying, sentencing, and punishing offenders), so must not every man take upon

* Βροντῶν καὶ ἀστραπτων ἐκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

† Chrys. in 2 Tim. ii. 24. Ὁ γὰρ σφοδρὸς ἔλεγχος, ὅταν μετ' ἐπιεικείας γίνεται, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μάλιστα δακεῖν δυνάμενος. ἔνεστι γὰρ, ἔνεστι μετὰ πραότητος καθάψασθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ μετὰ θρασύτητος ἐντρέψαι.

‡ This case is like the other cases, wherein the practice of good and great men, although excusable, is not yet exemplary: as the heroical acts of David, of Samson, of Ehud, of Phineas, of Elias, of Moses: David's duel, Samson's suicide, Moses's slaying the Egyptian, Ehud's stabbing the king of Moab, Elias's calling for fire, by extraordinary and peculiar instinct.

j Prov. xxiv. 26. k 2 Tim. ii. 25. l 1 Pet. ii. 23. m 1 Cor. iv. 12; Rom. xii. 14.

him to speak against those who seem to do ill; which is a sort of punishment, including the infliction of smart and damage upon the persons concerned. Every man hath indeed a commission, in due place and season, with discretion and moderation to admonish his neighbour offending; but otherwise to speak ill of him, no private man hath just right or authority: and therefore in presuming to do it he is disorderly and irregular, trespassing beyond his bounds, usurping an undue power to himself.

2. We should never speak ill of any man without apparent just cause. It must be just: we must not reproach men for things innocent or indifferent; for not concurring in disputable opinions with us, for not complying with our humour, for not serving our interest, for not doing any thing to which they are not obliged, or for using their liberty in any case: it must be at least some considerable fault, which we can so much as tax. It must also be clear and certain, notorious and palpable; for to speak ill upon slender conjectures, or doubtful suspicions, is full of iniquity. "Ὁσα οὐκ οἴδασι, βλασφημοῦσι, *they rail at things which they know not*, is part of those wicked men's character, whom St. Jude[n] doth so severely reprehend. If indeed, these conditions being wanting, we presume to reproach any man, we do therein no less than slander him; which to do is unlawful in any case, is in truth a most diabolical and detestable crime. To impose odious names and characters on any person, which he deserveth not, or without ground of truth, is to play the Devil; and hell itself scarce will own a fouler practice.

3. We should not cast reproach upon any man without some necessary reason. In charity (that *charity which covereth all sins*, which *covereth a multitude of sins*[o]) we are bound to connive at the defects, and to conceal the faults of our brethren; to extenuate and excuse them when apparent, so far as we may in truth and equity. We must not therefore ever produce them to light, or prosecute them with severity, except very needful occasion urgeth: such as is the glory and service of God, the maintenance of truth, the vindication of innocence, the preservation of public justice and peace, the amendment of our neighbour himself, or securing others from contagion. Barring such reasons (really being, not affectedly pretended), we are bound not so much as to disclose, as to touch our neighbour's faults; much more, not to blaze them about, not to exaggerate them by vehement invectives.

4. We should never speak ill of any man beyond measure: be the cause never so just, the occasion never so necessary, we should yet nowise be immoderate therein, exceeding the bounds prescribed by truth, equity, and humanity. We should never speak worse of any man whatever than he certainly deserveth, according to the most favourable construction of his doings; never more than the cause absolutely requireth. We should rather be careful to fall short of what in rigorous truth might be said against him, than in the least to pass beyond it. The best cause had better seem to suffer a little by our reservedness in its defence, than any man be wronged by our aspersing him; for God, the patron of truth and right, is ever able to secure them without the succour of our unjust and uncharitable dealing. The contrary practice hath indeed within it a spice of slander, that is, of the worst iniquity.

5. We must never speak ill of any man out of bad principles, or for bad ends.

No sudden or rash anger should instigate us thereto. For, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice*,[p] is the apostolical precept: they are all associates and kindred, which are to be cast away together. Such anger itself is culpable, as a work of the flesh, and therefore to be suppressed; and all its brood therefore is also to be smothered: the daughter of such a mother cannot be legitimate. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*[q]

We must not speak ill out of inveterate hatred or ill-will. For this murderous, this viperous disposition, should itself be rooted out of our hearts: whatever

[n] Jude 10.
[o] Prov. x. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 4.
[p] Eph. iv. 31; Col. iii. 8.
[q] James i. 20.

issueth from it cannot be otherwise than very bad: it must be a poisonous breath that exhaleth from that foul source.

We must not be provoked thereto by any revengeful disposition, or rancorous spleen, in regard to any injuries or discourtesies received. For, as we must not revenge ourselves, or render evil in any other way; so particularly not in this, which is commonly the special instance expressly prohibited. *Render not evil for evil*, saith St. Peter, *nor railing for railing; but contrariwise bless*, or speak well: and, *Bless them*, saith our Lord, *which curse you; Bless*, saith St. Paul, *and curse not.*[r]

We must not also do it out of contempt: for we are not to slight our brethren in our hearts. No man really (considering what he is, whence he came, how he is related, what he is capable of) can be despicable. Extreme naughtiness is indeed contemptible; but the unhappy person that is engaged therein is rather to be pitied than despised.[s] However, charity bindeth us to stifle contemptuous motions of heart, and not to vent them in vilifying expressions. Particularly, it is a barbarous practice out of contempt to reproach persons for natural imperfections, for meanness of condition, for unlucky disasters, for any involuntary defects: this being indeed to reproach mankind, unto which such things are incident; to reproach Providence, from the disposal whereof they do proceed. *Whoso mocketh the poor despiseth his Maker*,[t] saith the Wise Man: and the same may be said of him that reproachfully mocketh him that is dull in parts, deformed in body, weak in health or strength, or defective in any such way.

Likewise we must not speak ill out of envy; because others do excel us in any good quality, or exceed us in fortune. To harbour this base and ugly disposition in our minds is unworthy of a man, who should delight in all good springing up anywhere, and befalling any man naturally allied unto him; it is most unworthy of a Christian, who should tender his brother's good as his own, and *rejoice with those that rejoice.*[u] From thence to be drawn to cast reproach upon any man, is horrible and heinous wickedness.

Neither should we ever use reproach as a means of compassing any design we do affect or aim at: it is an unwarrantable engine of raising us to wealth, dignity, or repute. To grow by the diminution, to rise by the depression, to shine by the eclipse of others, to build a fortune upon the ruins of our neighbour's reputation, is that which no honourable mind can affect, no honest man will endeavour. Our own wit, courage, and industry, managed with God's assistance and blessing, are sufficient, and only lawful instruments of prosecuting honest enterprises; we need not, we must not instead of them employ our neighbour's disgrace; no worldly good is worth purchasing at such a rate, no project worth achieving by such foul ways.

Neither should we out of malignity, to cherish or gratify ill humour, use this practice. It is observable of some persons, that not out of any formed displeasure, grudge, or particular disaffection, nor out of any particular design, but merely out of a κακοήθεια, an ill disposition, springing up from nature, or contracted by use, they are apt to carp at any action, and with sharp reproach to bite any man that comes in their way, thereby feeding and soothing that evil inclination. But as this inhuman and currish humour should be corrected and extirpated from our hearts, so should the issues thereof at our mouths be stopped: the bespattering our neighbour's good name should never afford any satisfaction or delight unto us.

Nor out of wantonness should we speak ill, for our divertisement or sport. For our neighbour's reputation is too great and precious a thing to be played with, or offered up to sport; we are very foolish in so disvaluing it, very naughty in so misusing it. Our wits are very barren, our brains are ill furnished with store of knowledge, if we can find no other matter of conversation.

Nor out of negligence and inadvertency should we sputter out reproachful speech; shooting ill words at rovers, or not regarding who stands in our way. Among all temerities this is one of the

[r] 1 Pet. iii. 9; Matt. v. 44; Rom. xii. 14; Deut. xxv. 3.

[s] He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour.—Prov. xi. 12.

[t] Prov. xvii. 5.

[u] Rom. xii. 15.

most noxious, and therefore very culpable.

In fine, we should never speak concerning our neighbour from any other principle than charity, or to any other intent but what is charitable; such as tendeth to his good, or at least is consistent therewith. *Let all your things* (saith St. Paul) *be done in charity*:[v] and words are most of the *things* we do concerning our neighbour, wherein we may express charity. In all our speeches, therefore, touching him, we should plainly show that we have a care of his reputation, that we tender his interest, that we even desire his content and repose. Even when reason and need do so require, that we should disclose and reprehend his faults, we may, we should, by the manner and scope of our speech, signify thus much. Which rule were it observed, if we should never speak ill otherwise than out of charity, surely most ill-speaking would be cut off; most, I fear, of our tattling about others, much of our gossipping, would be marred.

Indeed, so far from bitter or sour our language should be, that it ought to be sweet and pleasant;[w] so far from rough and harsh, that it should be courteous and obliging; so far from signifying wrath, ill will, contempt, or animosity, that it should express tender affection, good esteem, sincere respect toward our brethren; and be apt to produce the like in them toward us: the sense of them should be grateful to the heart: the very sound and accent of them should be delightful to the ear. *Every one* should *please his neighbour for his good to edification.* Our *words* should *always be* ἐν χάριτι, *with grace, seasoned with salt*;[x] they should have the grace of courtesy, they should be seasoned with the salt of discretion, so as to be sweet and savoury to the hearers.* Commonly ill language is a certain sign of inward enmity and ill-will. Good-will is wont to show itself in good terms; it clotheth even its grief handsomely, and its displeasure carrieth favour in its face; its rigour is civil and gentle, tempered with pity for the faults and errors which it disliketh, with the desire of their amendment and recovery whom it reprehendeth. It would inflict no more evil than is necessary; it would cure its neighbour's disease without exasperating his patience, troubling his modesty, or impairing his credit. As it always judgeth candidly, so it never condemneth extremely.

II. But so much for the explication of this precept, and the directive part of our discourse. I shall now briefly propound some inducements to the observance thereof.

1. Let us consider, that nothing more than railing and reviling is opposite to the nature, and inconsistent with the tenor of our religion;* the which, as even a heathen did observe of it, *nil nisi justum saudet, et lene, doth recommend nothing but what is very just and mild*:[y] which propoundeth the practices of charity, meekness, patience, peaceableness, moderation, equity, alacrity or good humour, as its principal laws, and declareth them the chief fruits of the divine Spirit and grace: which chargeth us to curb and compose all our passions; more particularly to restrain and repress anger, animosity, envy, malice, and such like dispositions, as the fruits of carnality and corrupt lust: which consequently drieth up all the sources, or dammeth up the sluices of bad language. As it doth *above all things*[z] oblige us to bear no ill-will in our hearts, so it chargeth us to vent none with our mouths.

2. It is therefore often expressly condemned and prohibited as evil. It is the property of the wicked, a character of those who *work iniquity*, to *whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*[a]

3. No practice hath more severe punishments denounced to it than this. The

* Charitas—cum arguit mitis est, cum blanditur simplex est: pie solet sævire, sine dolo mulcere; patienter novit irasci, humiliter indignari.—*S. Bern.* Ep. ii.

[v] 1 Cor. xvi. 14. [w] Prov. xv. 26; xvi. 24.
[x] Rom. xv. 2; 1 Cor. x. 33; Col. iv. 6.

* Lingua Christum confessa non sit maledica, non turbulenta, non convitiis et litibus perstrepens audiatur.—*Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.*

Convitiis et maledictis quæso vos abstinete; quia neque maledici regnum Dei consequentur; et lingua quæ Christum confessa est, incolumis et pura cum suo honore servanda est. —*Cypr.* Ep. vii.

[y] Ammian. Marcell. [z] 1 Pet. iv. 8.
[a] Psal. lxiv. 3.

railer (and it is indeed a very proper and fit punishment for him, he being exceedingly bad company) is to be banished out of all good society: thereto St. Paul adjudgeth him: *I have* (saith he) *now written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one not to eat.*[b] Ye see what company the railer hath in the text, and with what a crew of people he is coupled: but no good company he is allowed otherwhere; every good Christian should avoid him as a blot, and a pest of conversation: and finally he is sure to be excluded from the blessed society above in heaven;* for *neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God:*[c] and, *Without* (without the heavenly city) *are dogs,*[d] saith St. John in his Revelation; that is, these chiefly who out of currish spite or malignity do frowardly bark at their neighbours, or cruelly bite them with reproachful language.

4. If we look upon such language in its own nature, what is it but a symptom of a foul, a weak, a disordered and distempered mind? It is the smoke of inward rage and malice: it is a stream that cannot issue from a sweet spring: it is a storm that cannot bluster out of a calm region. *The words of the pure are pleasant words,*[e] as the Wise Man saith.

5. This practice doth plainly signify low spirit, ill breeding, and bad manners; and thence misbecometh any wise, any honest, any honourable person. It agreeth to children, who are unapt and unaccustomed to deal in matters considerable, to squabble; to women of meanest rank (apt by nature, or custom, to be transported with passion), to scold. In our modern languages it is termed *villainy*, as being proper for rustic boors, or men of coarsest education and employment; who, having their minds debased by being conversant in meanest affairs, do vent their sorry passions, and bicker about their petty concernments, in such strains; who also, being not capable of a fair reputation, or sensible of disgrace to themselves, do little value the credit of others, or care for aspersing it. But such language is unworthy of those persons, and cannot easily be drawn from them, who are wont to exercise their thoughts about nobler matters, who are versed in affairs manageable only by calm deliberation and fair persuasion, not by impetuous and provocative rudeness; the which do never work otherwise upon masculine souls, than so as to procure disdain and resistance. Such persons, knowing the benefit of a good name, being wont to possess a good repute, prizing their own credit as a considerable good, will never be prone to bereave others of the like by opprobrious speech. A noble enemy will never speak of his enemy in bad terms.*

We may further consider, that all wise, all honest, all ingenuous persons, have an aversation from ill speaking, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence; that only ill-natured, unworthy, and naughty people, are its willing auditors, or do abet it with applause. The good man, in the fifteenth Psalm, *non accipit opprobrium, doth not take up*, or accept, *a reproach against his neighbour:*[f] but *A wicked doer*, saith the Wise Man, *giveth heed to false lips, and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.*[g] And what reasonable man will do that which is disgustful to the wise and good, is grateful only to the foolish and baser sort of men?† I pretermit, that using this sort of language doth incapacitate a man for to benefit his neighbour, and defeateth his endeavours for his edification, disparaging a good cause, prejudicing the defence of truth, obstructing the effects of good instruction and wholesome reproof; as we did before remark and declare. Further,

6. He that useth this kind of speech doth, as harm and trouble others, so create many great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself thereby. Nothing so inflameth

* Hinc intelligere possumus quam gravis sit et perniciosa maledictio, quando, etiamsi alia bona ad fuerint, sola excludit a cœlo.—*Salv. de Guber. Dei*, lib. iii.

[b] 1 Cor. v. 11. [c] 1 Cor. vi. 10.
[d] Rev. xxii. 15. [e] Prov. xv. 26.

* In quo admirari soleo gravitatem et justitiam et sapientiam Cæsaris, qui nunquam nisi honorificentissime Pompeium appellat.—*Cic. Epist.* tom. vi. 6.

† It is always taken as an argument of ill-will. Maledicus a malefico non distat, nisi occasionne.—*Quint.* xii. 9.

[f] Psal. xv. 3. [g] Prov. xvii. 4.

the wrath of men, so provoketh their enmity, so breedeth lasting hatred and spite, as do contumelious words. They are often called *swords* and *arrows*;[h] and as such they pierce deeply, and cause most grievous smart; which men feeling are enraged, and accordingly will strive to requite them in the like manner, and in all other obvious ways of revenge.[i] Hence strife, clamour and tumult, care, suspicion and fear, danger and trouble, sorrow and regret, do seize on the reviler; and he is sufficiently punished for this dealing. No man can otherwise than live in perpetual fear of reciprocal like usage from him, whom he is conscious of having so abused. Whence, if not justice or charity toward others, yet love and piety of ourselves, should persuade us to forbear it as disquietful, incommodious, and mischievous to us.

We should indeed certainly enjoy much love, much concord, much quiet, we should live in great safety and security, we should be exempted from much care and fear, if we would restrain ourselves from abusing and offending our neighbour in this kind: being conscious of so just and innocent demeanour toward him, we should converse with him in pleasant freedom and confidence, not suspecting any bad language or ill usage from him.

7. Hence with evidently good reason is he that useth such language called a *fool:* and he that abstaineth from it is commended as wise. *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. He that refraineth his tongue is wise. In the tongue of the wise is health. He that keepeth his lips keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his mouth* (that is, in evil-speaking, gaping with clamour and vehemency) *shall have destruction. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious: but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof;*[k] that is, of the one or the other, answerably to the kind of speech they choose.

In fine, very remarkable is that advice, or resolution of the grand point concerning the best way of living happily, in the Psalmist: *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*[l] Abstinence from ill-speaking he seemeth to propose as the first step toward the fruition of a durably-happy life.

8. Lastly, we may consider that it is a grievous perverting the design of speech (that excellent faculty, which so much distinguisheth us from, so highly advanceth us above, other creatures), to use it to the defaming and disquieting our neighbour. It was given us as an instrument of beneficial commerce, and delectable conversation; that with it we might assist and advise, might cheer and comfort one another: we therefore, in employing it to the disgrace, vexation, damage or prejudice in any kind, of our neighbour, do foully abuse it; and so doing, render ourselves indeed worse than dumb beasts: for better far it were that we could say nothing, than that we should speak ill.*

Now the God of grace and *peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*[m]

SERMON XVII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.—*He that uttereth slander is a fool.*

GENERAL declamations against vice and sin are indeed excellently useful, as rousing men to consider and look about them: but they do often want effect, because they only raise confused apprehensions

[h] The scourge of the tongue, Job v. 21; Prov. xii. 18,—There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword; Psal. lvii. 4; lix. 7; lxiv. 3; Psal. lii. 2,—sharp razor; Prov. xxx. 14,—knives.

[i] The froward tongue shall be cut out,—Prov. x. 31.

* Mutos nasci, et egere omni ratione satius fuisset, quam providentiæ munera in mutuam perniciem convertere.—*Quint.* xii. 1.

[k] Prov. xviii. 6, 7; x. 19; xii. 18; xiii. 3; Eccles. x. 12; Prov. xviii. 21.

[l] Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13.

[m] Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

of things, and indeterminate propensions to action; the which usually, before men thoroughly perceive or resolve what they should practise, do decay and vanish. As he that cries out fire doth stir up people, and inspireth them with a kind of hovering tendency every way, yet no man thence to purpose moveth, until he be distinctly informed where the mischief is; then do they, who apprehend themselves concerned, run hastily to oppose it; so, till we particularly discern where our offences lie (till we distinctly know the heinous nature and the mischievous consequences of them), we scarce will effectually apply ourselves to correct them. Whence it is requisite, that men should be particularly acquainted with their sins, and by proper arguments be dissuaded from them.

In order whereto, I have now selected one sin to describe, and to dissuade from, being in nature as vile, and in practice as common, as any other whatever that hath prevailed among men. It is slander, a sin which in all times and places hath been epidemical and rife; but which especially doth seem to reign and rage in our age and country.

There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and ever will incline them to this offence. Eager appetites to secular and sensual good; violent passions, urging the prosecution of what men affect; wrath and displeasure against those who stand in the way of compassing their desires; emulation and envy toward those who hap to succeed better, or to attain a greater share in such things; excessive self-love; unaccountable malignity and vanity, are in some degrees connatural to all men, and ever prompt them to this dealing, as appearing the most efficacious, compendious, and easy way of satisfying such appetites, of promoting such designs, of discharging such passions. Slander thence hath always been a principal engine, whereby covetous, ambitious, envious, ill-natured, and vain persons have strove to supplant their competitors, and advance themselves; meaning thereby to procure, what they chiefly prize and like, wealth, or dignity, or reputation, favour and power in the court, respect and interest with the people.

But from especial causes our age peculiarly doth abound in this practice: for, besides the common dispositions inclining thereto, there are conceits newly coined, and greedily entertained by many, which seem purposely levelled at the disparagement of piety, charity, and justice, substituting interest in the room of concience, authorising and commending, for good and wise, all ways serving to private advantage. There are implacable dissensions, fierce animosities, and bitter zeals sprung up; there is an extreme curiosity, niceness, and delicacy of judgment; there is a mighty affectation of seeming wise and witty by any means; there is a great unsettlement of mind, and corruption of manners, generally diffused over people: from which sources it is no wonder that this flood hath so overflown, that no banks can restrain it, no fences are able to resist it; so that ordinary conversation is full with it, and no demeanour can be secure from it.

If we do mark what is done in many (might I not say, in most companies, what is it, but one telling malicious stories of, or fastening odious characters upon, an other? What do men commonly please themselves in so much, as in carping and harshly censuring, in defaming and abusing their neighbours? Is it not the sport and divertisement of many, to cast dirt in the faces of all they meet with; to bespatter any man with foul imputations? Doth not in every corner a Momus lurk, from the venom of whose spiteful or petulant tongue no eminency of rank, dignity of place, or sacredness of office, no innocence or integrity of life, no wisdom or circumspection in behaviour, no good nature, or benignity in dealing and carriage, can protect any person? Do not men assume to themselves a liberty of telling romances, and framing characters concerning their neighbour, as freely as a poet doth about Hector or Turnus, Thersites or Draucus? Do they not usurp a power of playing with, of tossing about, of tearing in pieces their neighbour's good name, as if it were the veriest toy in the world? Do not many, *having a form of godliness* (some of them demurely, others confidently, both without any sense of, or remorse for what they do), backbite their brethren? Is it not grown so common a thing to asperse causelessly, that no man

wonders at it, that few dislike, that scarce any detest it? that most notorious calumniators are heard, not only with patience, but with pleasure; yea, are even held in vogue and reverence, as men of a notable talent, and very serviceable to their party? so that slander seemeth to have lost its nature, and not to be now an odious sin, but a fashionable humour, a way of pleasing entertainment, a fine knack, or curious feat of policy; so that no man at least taketh himself or others to be accountable for what is said in this way. Is not, in fine, the case become such, that whoever hath in him any love of truth, any sense of justice or honesty, any spark of charity toward his brethren, shall hardly be able to satisfy himself in the conversations he meeteth; but will be tempted, with the holy Prophet, to wish himself sequestered from society, and cast into solitude; repeating those words of his, *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they are—an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies?*[a] This he wished in an age so resembling ours, that I fear the description with equal patness may suit both: *Take ye heed* (said he then; and may we not advise the like now?) *every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. They will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.*[b]

Such being the state of things obvious to experience, no discourse may seem more needful or useful, than that which serveth to correct or check this practice: the which I shall endeavour to do,—1. by describing the nature; 2. by declaring the folly of it; or showing it to be very true which the Wise Man here asserteth, *He that uttereth slander is a fool.* The which particulars I hope so to prosecute, that any man shall be able easily to discern, and ready heartily to detest this practice.

I. For explication of its nature, we may describe slander to be the uttering false (or equivalent to false, morally false) speech against our neighbour, in prejudice to his fame, his safety, his welfare, or concernment in any kind, out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill-nature, or bad design. That which is in holy Scripture forbidden and reproved under several names and notions; of *bearing false witness*, *false accusation*, *railing censure*, *sycophantry*, *tale-bearing*, *whispering*, *backbiting*, *supplanting*, *taking up reproach*:[c] which terms some of them do signify the nature, others denote the special kinds, others imply the manners, others suggest the ends of this practice. But it seemeth most fully intelligible by observing the several kinds and degrees thereof; as also by reflecting on the divers ways and manners of practising it.

The principal kinds thereof I observe to be these:—

1. The grossest kind of slander is that which in the decalogue is called *bearing false testimony against our neighbour;* that is, flatly charging him with facts the which he never committed, and is nowise guilty of. As in the case of Naboth, when men were suborned to say, *Naboth did blaspheme God and the king:* and as was David's case when he thus complained, *False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not of.*[d] This kind in the highest way (that is, in judicial proceedings) is more rare; and of all men, they who are detected to practise it are held most vile and infamous; as being plainly the most pernicious and perilous instruments of injustice, the most desperate enemies of all men's right and safety that can be. But also out of the court there are many knights-errant of the post, whose business it is to run about scattering false reports; sometimes loudly proclaiming them in open companies, sometimes closely whispering them in dark corners; thus infecting conversation with their poisonous breath: these no less notoriously are guilty of this kind, as bearing always the same malice, and sometimes breeding as ill effects.

[a] Jer. ix. 2, 3; vi. 28; Ezek. xxii. 9.
[b] Jer. ix. 4, 5.
[c] Exod. xx. 16; Psal. xxxv. 11; Jude 9; 2 Pet. ii. 11; Luke iii. 14; xix. 8; Levit. xix. 16; Prov. xviii. 8; xxvi. 20; xvi. 28; Rom. i. 29; 2 Cor. xii. 20; Psal. xv. 3; Rom. i. 30; Jer. ix. 4; Psal. xv. 3.
[d] 1 Kings xxi. 13; Psal. xxxv. 11.

2. Another kind is, affixing scandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters upon persons, which they deserve not. As when Corah and his complices did accuse Moses of being ambitious, unjust, and tyrannical: when the Pharisees called our Lord an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a glutton and wine-bibber, an incendiary and perverter of the people, one that *spake against Cæsar*, and *forbad to give tribute:* when the apostles were charged of being pestilent, turbulent, factious, and seditious fellows.[e] This sort being very common, and thence in ordinary repute not so bad, yet in just estimation may be judged even worse than the former; as doing to our neighbour more heavy and more irreparable wrong. For it imposeth on him really more blame, and that such which he can hardly shake off: because the charge signifieth habit of evil, and includeth many acts; then, being general and indefinite, can scarce be disproved. He, for instance, that calleth a sober man drunkard, doth impute to him many acts of such intemperance; some really past, others probably future; and no particular time or place being specified, how can a man clear himself of that imputation, especially with those who are not thoroughly acquainted with his conversation? So he that calleth a man unjust, proud, perverse, hypocritical, doth load him with the most grievous faults, which it is not possible that the most innocent person should discharge himself from.

3. Like to that kind is this, aspersing a man's actions with harsh censures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends; so as it doth not or cannot appear. Thus when we say of him that is generously hospitable, that he is profuse; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly; of him that is cheerful and free in his conversation, that he is vain or loose; of him that is serious and resolute in a good way, that he is sullen or morose; of him that is conspicuous and brisk in virtuous practice, that it is ambition or ostentation which actuates him; of him that is close and bashful in the like good way, that it is sneaking stupidity, or want of spirit; of him that is reserved, that it is craft; of him that is open, that it is simplicity in him:* when we ascribe a man's liberality and charity to vain-glory or popularity; his strictness of life and constancy in devotion, to superstition or hypocrisy: when, I say, we pass such censures, or impose such characters, on the laudable or innocent practice of our neighbours, we are indeed slanderers, imitating therein the great calumniator, who thus did slander even God himself, imputing his prohibition of the fruit unto envy toward men: (*God* (said he) *doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;*)[f] who thus did ascribe the steady piety of Job, not to a conscientious love and fear of God, but to policy and selfish design: *Doth Job fear God for naught?*[g]

Whoever indeed pronounceth concerning his neighbour's intentions otherwise than as they are evidently expressed by words, or signified by overt actions, is a slanderer; because he pretendeth to know, and dareth to aver, that which he noways possibly can tell whether it be true; because the heart is exempt from all jurisdiction here, is only subject to the government and trial of another world; because no man can judge concerning the truth of such accusations; because no man can exempt or defend himself from them: so that apparently such practice doth thwart all course of justice and equity.

4. Another kind is, perverting a man's words or actions disadvantageously by affected misconstruction.[h] All words are ambiguous, and capable of different senses (some fair, some more foul;) all actions have two handles, one that candour and charity will, another that disingenuity and spite may, lay hold on:† and in such cases, to misapprehend is a calumnious procedure, arguing malignant disposition and mischievous disign. Thus when two men did witness that our Lord affirmed

[e] Num. xvi. 3, 13, 14; John xix. 7, 21; Matt. xxvi. 65; ix. 3; xii. 24; xi. 19; Luke xxiii. 2, 5, 14; John xix. 12; Acts xvii. 6; xxiv. 5.

* At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque
Sincerum cupimus vas incrûstare. Probus quis
Nobiscum vivit? multum est demissus homo. Illi
Tardo cognomen pinguis damus, &c.
Hor. Serm. i. 3; Vid. *Sidon. Apoll.*

† Πᾶν πρᾶγμα ἔχει δύο λαβάς.—Epict.

[f] Gen. iii. 5. [g] Job i. 9; ii. 4.

[h] Jer. xxiii. 36.

he *could demolish the temple, and rear it again in three days*;[i] although he did indeed speak words to that purpose, meaning them in a figurative sense, discernible enough to those who would candidly have minded his drift and way of speaking; yet they who crudely alleged them against him are called false witnesses: *At last* (saith the Gospel) *came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple*, &c.[j] Thus also, when some certified of St. Stephen, as having said that *Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs that Moses delivered*; although probably he did speak words near to that purpose, yet are those men called false witnesses: *And* (saith St. Luke) *they set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words*, &c. Which instances plainly do show, if we would avoid the guilt of slander, how careful we should be to interpret fairly and favourably the words and the actions of our neighbour.

5. Another sort of this practice is, partial and lame representation of men's discourse, or their practice; suppressing some part of the truth in them, or concealing some circumstances about them, which might serve to explain, to excuse, or to extenuate them. In such a manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Thus suppose that a man speaketh a thing upon supposition, or with exception, or in any way of objection, or merely for disputation sake, in order to the discussion or clearing of truth; he that should report him asserting it absolutely, unlimitedly, positively and peremptorily, as his own settled judgment, would notoriously calumniate. If one should be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or slip by chance into a bad place, or bad company; he that should so represent the gross of that accident as to breed an opinion of that person, that out of pure disposition and design he did put himself there, doth slanderously abuse that innocent person. The reporter in such cases must not think to defend himself by pretending that he spake nothing false; for such propositions, however true in logic, may justly be deemed lies in morality, being uttered with a malicious and deceitful (that is, with a calumnious) mind, being apt to impress false conceits, and to produce hurtful effects concerning our neighbour. There are slanderous truths, as well as slanderous falsehoods: when truth is uttered with a deceitful heart, and to a base end, it becomes a lie. *He that speaketh truth* (saith the Wise Man) *showeth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.*[k] Deceiving is, the proper work of slander; and truth abused to that end putteth on its nature, and will engage into like guilt.

6. Another kind of calumny is, by instilling sly suggestions; which although they do not downrightly assert falsehoods, yet they breed sinister opinions in the hearers;* especially in those who from weakness or credulity, from jealousy or prejudice, from negligence or inadvertency, are prone to entertain them. This is done many ways; by propounding wily suppositions, shrewd insinuations, crafty questions, and specious comparisons, intimating a possibility, or inferring some likelihood of, and thence inducing to believe the fact. Doth not, saith this kind of slanderer, his temper incline him to do thus? may not his interest have swayed him thereto? had he not fair opportunity and strong temptation to it? hath he not acted so in like cases? judge you therefore whether he did it not. Thus the close slanderer argueth; and a weak or prejudiced person is thereby so caught, that he presently is ready thence to conclude the thing done. Again: he doeth well, saith the sycophant, it is true; but why, and to what end? Is it not, as most men do, out of ill design? may he not dissemble now? may he not recoil hereafter? have not others made as fair a show? yet we know what came of it. Thus do calumnious tongues pervert the judgments of men to think ill of the most innocent, and meanly of the worthiest actions. Even commendation itself is often used calumniously, with intent to breed dislike and ill-will toward a person commended in envious or jeal-

[i] Matt. xxvi. 60, 61; John ii. 19.

[j] Psal. lvi. 5,—Every day they wrest my words. Matt. *ubi supra*; Acts vi. 13, 14.

* Vid. *Herm. Pastor.* Where the Pastor observes, that the Devil doth in his temptations intersperse some truths, serving to render his delusions passable.

[k] Prov. xii. 17.

ous ears; or so as to give passage to dispraises, and render the accusations following more credible. It is an artifice commonly observed to be much in use there, where the finest tricks of supplanting are practised with greatest effect; so that, *pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes;* there is no more pestilent enemy, than a malevolent praiser.* All these kinds of dealing, as they issue from the principles of slander, and perform its work, so they deservedly bear the guilt thereof.

A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflections; when a man doth not directly or expressly charge his neighbour with faults, but yet so speaketh, that he is understood, or reasonably presumed to do it. This is a very cunning and very mischievous way of slandering; for therein the sculking calumniator keepeth a reserve for himself, and cutteth off from the person concerned the means of defence. If he goeth to clear himself from the matter of such aspersions; What need, saith this insidious speaker, of that? must I needs mean you? did I name you? why do you then assume it to yourself? do you not prejudge yourself guilty? I did not, but your own conscience, it seemeth, doth accuse you. You are so jealous and suspicious, as persons over-wise or guilty use to be. So meaneth this serpent out of the hedge securely and unavoidably to bite his neighbour; and is in that respect more base and more hurtful than the most flat and positive slanderer.

8. Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating the faults of others; raising any small miscarriage into a heinous crime, any slender defect into an odious vice, and any common infirmity into a strange enormity; turning a small *mote in the eye* of our neighbour into a huge *beam*,[k] a little dimple in his face into a monstrous wen. This is plainly slander, at least in degree, and according to the surplusage whereby the censure doth exceed the fault. As he that, upon the score of a small debt, doth extort a great sum, is no less a thief, in regard to what amounts beyond his due, than if without any pretence he had violently or fraudulently seized on it: so is he a slanderer, that, by heightening faults or imperfections, doth charge his neighbour with greater blame, or loads him with more disgrace than he deserves. It is not only slander to pick a hole where there is none, but to make that wider which is, so that it appeareth more ugly, and cannot so easily be mended. For charity is wont to extenuate faults; justice doth never exaggerate them. As no man is exempt from some defects, or can live free from some misdemeanours; so by this practice every man may be rendered very odious and infamous.

9. Another kind of slander is, imputing to our neighbour's practice, judgment, or profession, evil consequences (apt to render him odious, or despicable) which have no dependence on them, or connection with them. There do in every age occur disorders and mishaps, springing from various complications of causes, working some of them in a more open and discernible, others in a more secret and subtile way (especially from divine judgment and providence checking or chastising sin:) from such occurrences it is common to snatch occasion and matter of calumny. Those who are disposed this way are ready peremptorily to charge them upon whomever they dislike or dissent from, although without any apparent cause, or upon most frivolous and senseless pretences; yea, often, when reason showeth the quite contrary, and they who are so charged are in just esteem of all men the least obnoxious to such accusations. So usually the best friends of mankind, those who most heartily wish the peace and prosperity of the world, and most earnestly to their power strive to promote them, have all the disturbances and disasters happening charged on them by those fiery *vixons*, who (in pursuance of their base designs, or gratification of their wild passions) really do themselves embroil things, and raise miserable combustions in the world. So it is, that they who have the conscience to do mischief, will have the confidence also to disavow the blame and the iniquity, to lay the burden of it on those who are most innocent. Thus, whereas nothing more disposeth men to live or-

* Excusando exprobraret.— *Tac. Ann.* i. p. 10.

Καινός τις εὕρηται τρόπος αὐτος τῆς διαβολῆς, τὸ μὴ ψέγοντας, ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦντας λυμαίνεσθαι τοὺς πέλας.— Polyb. lib. iv.

[k] Matt. vii. 3.

derly and peaceably, nothing more conduceth to the settlement and safety of the public, nothing so much draweth blessings down from heaven upon the commonweal, as true religion; yet nothing hath been more ordinary, than to attribute all the miscarriages and mischiefs that happened, unto it; even these are laid at its door, which plainly do arise from the contempt or neglect of it; being the natural fruits or the just punishments of irreligion. King Ahab, by *forsaking God's commandments* and following wicked superstitions, had *troubled Israel*, drawing sore judgments and calamities thereon; yet had he the heart and face to charge those events on the great assertor of piety, Elias: *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*[l] The Jews by provocation of divine justice had set themselves in a fair way towards desolation and ruin; this event to come they had the presumption to lay upon the faith of our Lord's doctrine: *If* (said they) *we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away our place and nation:*[m] whenas, in truth, a compliance with his directions and admonitions had been the only means to prevent those presaged mischiefs. And, *Si Tibris ascenderit in mœnia*, if any public calamity did appear, then *Christianos ad leones*,[n] Christians must be charged and persecuted as the causes thereof. To them it was that Julian and other pagans did impute all the concussions, confusions, and devastations falling upon the Roman empire. The sacking of Rome by the Goths they cast upon Christianity:* for the vindication of it from which reproach, St. Austin did write those renowned books *de Civitate Dei*. So liable are the best and most innocent sort of men to be calumniously accused in this manner.

Another practice (worthily bearing the guilt of slander) is, being aiding and accessory thereto, by any-wise furthering, cherishing, abetting it.† He that by crafty significations of ill-will doth prompt the slanderer to vent his poison; he that by a willing audience and attention doth readily suck it up, or who greedily swalloweth it down by credulous approbation and assent; he that pleasingly relisheth and smacketh at it, or expresseth a delightful complacence therein; as he is a partner in the fact, so he is a sharer in the guilt.* There are not only slanderous throats, but slanderous ears also; not only wicked inventions, which engender and brood lies, but wicked assents, which hatch and foster them. Not only the spiteful mother which conceiveth such spurious brats, but the midwife that helpeth to bring them forth, the nurse that feedeth them, the guardian that traineth them up to maturity, and setteth them forth to live in the world; as they do really contribute to their subsistence, so deservedly they partake in the blame due to them, and must be responsible for the mischief they do. For indeed, were it not for such free entertainers, such nourishers, such encouragers of them, slanders commonly would die in the womb, or prove still-born, or presently entering into the cold air would expire, or for want of nourishment soon would starve. It is such friends and patrons of them who are the causes that they are so rife; they it is who set ill-natured, base, and designing people upon devising, searching after, and picking up malicious and idle stories. Were it not for such customers, the trade of calumniating would fall.* Many pursue it merely out

* Christianis temporibus detrahunt, et mala, quæ illa civitas pertulit, Christo imputant.—*De Civ. Dei*, i. 1; iii. 31. They (saith the great father) detract from the Christian times, and impute the evils, which that city suffered, unto Christ.

† τὸ ἐμπρόσθεκτον τῆς διαβολῆς.—. Ant.

[l] 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18. [m] John xi. 48.

[n] Tertull. Apol.

* David, Psal. ci. 5.—Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: τοῦτον ἐξεδίωκον, him have I driven away, say the LXX.

Neque vero illa justa est excusatio, Referentibus aliis injuriam facere non possum. Nemo invito auditori libenter refert. Sagitta in lapidem nunquam figitur; interdum resiliens percutit dirigentem. Discat detractor, dum te videt non libenter audire, non facile detrahere.—*Hier. ad Nepot.* Ep. ii.

‡ Posidonius relateth of St. Austin, that he had upon his table written these two verses;

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,
Hanc mensam indignam novurit esse sibi:

(He that loveth by ill speech to gnaw the life of those who are absent, let him know himself unworthy to sit at this table; or, that this table is unfit for him:) And if any there did use detraction, he was offended, and minded them of those verses, threatening also to leave the table, and withdraw to his chamber.—*Posid.* cap. 22.

of servility and flattery, to tickle the ears, to soothe the humour, to gratify the malignant disposition or ill-will of others; who upon the least discouragement would give over the practice. If, therefore, we would exempt ourselves from all guilt of slander, we must not only abstain from venting it, but forbear to regard or countenance it:* for *He is* (saith the Wise Man) *a wicked doer*, who *giveth heed to false lips; and a liar*, who *giveth ear to a naughty tongue.*[o] Yea, if we thoroughly would be clear from it, we must show an aversation from hearing it; an unwillingness to believe it; an indignation against it; so either stifling it in the birth, or condemning it to death being uttered.† This is the sure way to destroy it, and to prevent its mischief. If we would stop our ears, we should stop the slanderer's mouth; if we would *resist the calumniator, he would fly from us*:[p] if we would reprove him, we should repel him. For, as *the north wind driveth away rain*,‡ *so* (the Wise Man telleth us) *doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*

These are the chief and most common kinds of slander; and there are several ways of practising them worthy our observing, that we may avoid them; namely these:—

1. The most notoriously heinous way is, forging and immediately venting ill stories. As it is said of Doeg, *Thy tongue deviseth mischief;* and of another like companion, *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit*:[q] and as our Lord saith of the devil, *When he speaketh a lie, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.*[r] This palpably is the supreme pitch of calumny, uncapable of any qualification or excuse: hell cannot go beyond this; the cursed fiend himself cannot worse employ his wit, than in minting wrongful falsehoods.

2. Another way is, receiving from others, and venting such stories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reasonably presume to be false; the becoming hucksters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no false coiner, who hath not some complices and emissaries ready to take from his hand, and put off his money: and such slanders at second hand are scarce less guilty than the first authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill; but the broacher showeth the like malice and wickedness. In this there is no great difference between the great Devil, that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps, that run about and disperse them.

3. Another way is, when one without competent examination, due weighing, and just reason, doth admit and spread tales prejudicial to his neighbour's welfare; relying for his warrant (as to the truth of them) upon any slight or slender authority. This is a very common and current practice: men presume it lawful enough to say over whatever they hear; to report any thing, if they can quote an author for it.* It is not, say they, my invention; I tell it as I heard it: *sit fides penes authorem;* let him that informed me undergo the blame, if it prove false. So do they conceive themselves excusable for being the instruments of injurious disgrace and damage to their neighbours. But they greatly mistake therein: for as this practice commonly doth arise from the same wicked principles, at least in some degree, and produceth altogether the like mischievous effects, as the wilful devising and conveying slander: so it no less thwarteth the rules of duty, and laws of equity; God hath prohibited it, and reason doth condemn it. *Thou shalt not* (saith God in the Law) *go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people*:[s] as a tale-bearer, (as *Rachil*,

* Οὐ παραδέξῃ ἀκοὴν ματαίαν, Thou shalt not receive (or take up) a false report, saith the Law. —*Exod.* xxiii. 1.

† Beatus est, qui ita se contra hoc vitium armavit, ut apud eum detrahere nemo audeat.—*Hier. ad Celantiam.*

‡ Prov. xxv. 23,—Ἂν μάθωσιν οἱ κακήγοροι ὅτι τῶν διαβαλλομένων μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς αὐτοὺς ἀποστρεφόμεθα, παύσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ τότε τῆς πονηρᾶς ταύτης συνηθείας, καὶ διορθώσονται τὸ ἁμάρτημα, καὶ ἐπαινέσονται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς, ὡς σωτῆρας αὐτῶν γενομένους, καὶ εὐεργέτας ἀνακηρύξουσιν. —Chrys. Ἀνέρ. γ΄.

[o] Prov. xvii. 4.

[p] Hedge thy ears with thorns, &c., Ecclus. xxviii. 24; ita legit. Cypr. Ep. 55.

[q] Psal. lii. 2; l. 19.

[r] John viii. 44; (Isa. xxxii. 7.)

* Τί διαπορθμεύεις τὸν λόγον; &c.—Chrys. in Heb. xi. 3. Δίον συσκιάζειν καὶ συγκρύπτειν τὰ ἐλαττώματα τῶν πλησίον, οὐ δὲ ἐκπομπεύειν, &c.—Ibid.

[s] Levit. xix. 16; Prov. xviii. 8; xxvi. 22.

that is) as a merchant or trader in ill reports and stories concerning our neighbour, to his prejudice. Not only the framing them, but the dealing in them beyond reason or necessity, is interdicted. And it is part of a good man's character, in the fifteenth Psalm, *Non accipit opprobrium, He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbour*;[t] that is, he doth not easily entertain it, much less doth he effectually propogate it: and in our text, *He* (it is said) *that uttereth slander* (not only he that conceiveth it) *is a fool.*

And in reason, before exact trial and cognizance, to meddle with the fame and interest of another, is evidently a practice full of iniquity, such as no man can allow in his own case, or brook being used toward himself, without judging himself to be extremely abused by such reporters. In all reason and equity (yea in all discretion), before we yield credence to any report concerning our neighbour, or adventure to relate it, many things are carefully to be weighed and scanned. We should, concerning our author, consider whether he be not a particular enemy, or disaffected to him; whether he be not ill-humoured, or a delighter in telling bad stories; whether he be not dishonest, or unregardful of justice in his dealings and discourse; whether he be not vain, or careless of what he saith; whether he be not light and credulous, or apt to be imposed upon by any small appearance; whether, at least in the present case, he be not negligent, or too forward and rash in speaking. We should also, concerning the matter reported, mind whether it be possible or probable; whether suitable to the disposition of our neighbour, to his principles, to the constant tenor of his practice; whether the action imputed to him be not liable to misapprehension, or his words to misconstruction. All reason and equity do, I say, exact from us diligently to consider such things, before we do either embrace ourselves, or transmit unto others, any story concerning our neighbour; lest unadvisedly we do him irreparable wrong and mischief. Briefly, we should take his case for our own, and consider whether we ourselves should be content, that upon like grounds or testimonies any man should believe or report disgraceful things concerning us. If we fail to do thus, we do (vainly, or rashly, or maliciously) conspire with the slanderer to the wrong of our innocent neighbour; and that in the Psalmist (by a parity of reason) may be transferred to us: *Thou hast consented unto the* liar, *and hast partaken with the* author of calumny.[u]

4. Of kin to this way is the assenting to popular rumours, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbour. Every one by experience knows how easily false news do rise, and how nimbly they scatter themselves; how often they are raised from nothing, how soon they from small sparks grow into a great blaze, how easily from one thing they are transformed into another: especially news of this kind, which do suit and feed the bad humour of the vulgar. 'Tis obvious to any man how true that is of Tacitus, how void of consideration, of judgment, of equity, the busy and talking part of mankind is.* Whoever therefore gives heed to flying tales, and thrusts himself into the herd of those who spread them, is either strangely injudicious, or very malignantly disposed. If he want not judgment, he cannot but know, that when he complieth with popular fame, it is mere chance that he doth not slander, or rather it is odds that he shall do so: he consequently showeth himself to be indifferent whether he doth it or no, or rather that he doth incline to do it: whence, not caring to be otherwise, or loving to be a slanderer, he in effect and just esteem is such; having at least a slanderous heart and inclination. He that puts it to the venture whether he lieth or no, doth *eo ipso* lie morally, as declaring no care or love of truth. *Thou shalt not* (saith the Law) *follow a multitude to do evil*:[v] and with like reason we should not follow the multitude in speaking evil of our neighbour.

* Plebi non judicium, non veritas. — *Tac. Ann.* xvi.

Non est consilium in vulgo, non ratio, non discrimen, non diligentia—ex opinione plurima, ex veritate pauca judicat.—*Cic. pro Planco.*

Λαῳ λὴ πίστευε· πολύτροπός ἐστιν ὅμιλος.—Phocyl.

Prov. xiv. 15,—The simple believeth every word.

[t] Psal. xv. 3.

[u] Psal. l. 18.

[v] Exod. xxiii. 2.

5. Another slanderous course is, to build censures and reproaches upon slender conjectures, or uncertain suspicions, (those ὑπόνοιαι, πονηραί, *evil surmises*, which St. Paul condemneth.)[w] Of these, occasion can never be wanting to them who seek them, or are ready to embrace them; no innocence, no wisdom, can any wise prevent them; and if they may be admitted as grounds of defamation, no man's good name can be secure. But he that upon such accounts dareth to asperse his neighbour is in moral computation no less a slanderer, than if he did the like out of pure invention, or without any ground at all:[x] for doubtful and false in this case differ little; to devise and to divine, in matters of this nature, do import near the same. He that will judge or speak ill of others, ought to be well assured of what he thinks or says: he that asserteth that which he doth not know to be true, doth as well lie, as he that affirmeth that which he knoweth to be false (for he deceiveth the hearers, begetting in them an opinion that he is assured of what he affirms;) especially in dealing with the concernments of others, whose right and repute justice doth oblige us to beware of infringing, charity should dispose us to regard and tender as our own. It is not every possibility, every seeming, every faint show or glimmering appearance, which sufficeth to ground bad opinion or reproachful discourse concerning our brother: the matter should be clear, notorious, and palpable; before we admit a disadvantageous conceit into our head, a distasteful resentment into our heart, a harsh word into our mouth about him. Men may fancy themselves sagacious and shrewd (persons of deep judgment and fine wit they may be taken for), when they can dive into others' hearts, and sound their intentions; when through thick mists or at remote distances they can descry faults in them; when they collect ill of them by long trains, and subtle fetches of discourse: but in truth they do thereby rather bewray in themselves small love of truth, care of justice, or sense of charity, together with little wisdom and discretion: for truth is only seen in a clear light; justice requireth strict proof: *charity thinketh no evil*, and *believeth all things*[y] for the best; wisdom is not forward to pronounce before full evidence. (*He*, saith the Wise Man, *that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*[z]) In fine, they who proceed thus, as it is usual that they speak falsely, as it is casual that they ever speak truly, as they affect to speak ill, true or false; so worthily they are to be reckoned among slanderers.

6. Another like way of slandering is, impetuous or negligent sputtering out of words, without minding what truth or consequence there is in them, how they may touch or hurt our neighbour. To avoid this sin, we must not only be free from intending mischief, but wary of effecting it; not only careful of not wronging one distinct person, but of harming any promiscuously; not only abstinent from aiming directly, but provident not to hit casually any person with obloquy. For as he that dischargeth shot into a crowd, or so as not to look about regarding who may stand in the way, is no less guilty of doing mischief, and bound to make satisfaction to them he woundeth, than if he had aimed at some one person: so if we fling our bad words at random, which may light unluckily, and defame somebody, we become slanderers unawares, and before we think on it. This practice hath not ever all the malice of the worst slander, but it worketh often the effects thereof, and therefore doth incur its guilt and its punishment; especially it being commonly derived from ill temper, or from bad habit, which we are bound to watch over, to curb, and to correct. The tongue is a sharp and parlous weapon, which we are bound to keep up in the sheath, or never to draw forth but advisedly, and upon just occasion; it must ever be wielded with caution and care: to brandish it wantonly, to lay about with it blindly and furiously, to slash and smite therewith any that happeneth to come in our way, doth argue malice or madness.

7. It is an ordinary way of proceeding to calumniate, for men, reflecting upon some bad disposition in themselves (although resulting from their own particular temper, from their bad principles, or from their ill custom), to charge it pres-

[w] 1 Tim. vi. 4; Matt. ix. 4.
[x] Ziba. 2 Sam. xvi. 3, xix. 27.
[y] 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7. [z] Prov. xviii. 13.

ently upon others; presuming others to be like themselves: like the wicked person in the Psalm, *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*[a] This is to slander mankind first in the gross; then in retail, as occasion serveth, to asperse any man: this is the way of half-witted Machiavelians, and of desperate reprobates in wickedness, who, having prostituted their consciences to vice, for their own defence and solace would shroud themselves from blame under the shelter of common pravity and infirmity; accusing all men of that whereof they know themselves guilty.* But surely there can be no greater iniquity than this, that one man should undergo blame for the ill conscience of another.

These seem to be the chief kinds of slander, and most common ways of practising it. In which description the folly thereof doth, I suppose, so clearly shine, that no man can look thereon without loathing and despising it, as not only a very ugly, but a most foolish practice. No man surely can be wise, who will suffer himself to be defiled therewith. But to render its folly more apparent, we shall display it; declaring it to be extremely foolish upon several accounts.

But the doing this, in regard to your patience, we shall forbear at present.

SERMON XVIII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.—*He that uttereth slander is a fool.*

I HAVE formerly in this place, discoursing upon this text, explained the nature of the sin here condemned, with its several kinds and ways of practising.

II. I shall now proceed to declare the folly of it; and to make good by divers reasons the assertion of the Wise Man, that *he who uttereth slander is a fool.*

1. Slandering is foolish, as sinful and wicked.

All sin is foolish upon many accounts; as proceeding from ignorance, error, inconsiderateness, vanity; as implying weak judgment and irrational choice; as thwarting the dictates of reason and best rules of wisdom; as producing very mischievous effects to ourselves, bereaving us of the chief goods, and exposing us to the worst evils. What can be more egregiously absurd, than to dissent in our opinion and discord in our choice from infinite wisdom; to provoke by our actions sovereign justice and immutable severity; to oppose almighty power, and offend immense goodness; to render ourselves unlike, and contrary in our doings, our disposition, our state, to absolute perfection and felicity? What can be more desperately wild, than to disoblige our best friend, to forfeit his love and favour, to render him our enemy, who is our Lord and our Judge, upon whose mere will and disposal all our subsistence, all our welfare, does absolutely depend? what greater madness can be conceived, than to deprive our minds of all true content here, and to separate our souls from eternal bliss hereafter; to gall our consciences now with sore remorse, and to engage ourselves for ever in remediless miseries? Such folly doth all sin include: whence, in scripture style, worthily goodness and wisdom are terms equivalent; sin and folly do signify the same thing.

If thence this practice be proved extremely sinful, it will thence sufficiently be demonstrated no less foolish. And that it is extremely sinful, may easily be showed. It is the character of the superlatively wicked man: *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit: thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*[a] It is indeed plainly the blackest and most hellish sin that can be; that which giveth the grand fiend his names, and most expresseth his nature. He is ὁ Διάβολος, *the slanderer; Satan* the spiteful *adversary;* the *old snake*, or *dragon*, hissing out lies, and spitting forth venom of calumnious accusation; *the accuser of the brethren*, a murderous, envious, malicious calumniator; *the father of lies;* the grand defamer of God to man, of man to God, of one man to another.[b] And highly wicked surely must

* Remedium pœnæ suæ arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus, si omnibus detrahatur, si turba sit pereuntium, &c.— *Hier ad Assellam*, Ep. xcix.

[a] Psal. l. 21.

[a] Psal. l. 19, 20.

[b] Apoc. xii. 10; John viii. 44.

that practice be, whereby we grow namesakes to him, conspire in proceeding with him, resemble his disposition and nature. It is a complication, a comprisal, a collection and sum of all wickedness; opposite to all the principal virtues (to veracity and sincerity, to charity and justice), transgressing all the great commandments, violating immediately and directly all the duties concerning our neighbour.

To lie simply is a great fault, being a deviation from that good rule which prescribeth truth in all our words; rendering us unlike and disagreeable to God, who is *the God of truth*[c] (who loveth truth, and practiseth it in all his doings, who abominateth all falsehood;) including a treacherous breach of faith toward mankind (we being all, in order to the maintenance of society, by an implicit compact obliged by speech to declare our mind, to inform truly, and not to impose upon our neighbour;) arguing pusillanimous timorousness and impotency of mind, a distrust in God's help, and diffidence in all good means to compass our designs; begetting deception and error, a foul and ill-favoured brood: lying, I say, is upon such accounts a sinful and blameable thing: and of all lies those certainly are the worst, which proceed from malice, or from vanity, or from both, and which work mischief; such as slanders are.

Again, to bear any hatred or ill-will, to exercise enmity toward any man, to design or procure any mischief to our neighbour, whom even Jews were commanded to *love as themselves*,[d] whose good, by many laws, and upon divers scores, we are obliged to tender as our own, is a heinous fault: and of this apparently the slanderer is most guilty in the highest degree. For evidently true it is which the Wise Man affirmeth, *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted with it*;[e] there is no surer argument of extreme hatred; nothing but the height of ill-will can suggest this practice. The slanderer is an enemy, as the most fierce and outrageous, so the most base and unworthy that can be: he fighteth with the most perilous and most unlawful weapon, in the most furious and foul way that can be. His weapon is an envenomed *arrow, full of deadly poison*, which *he shooteth suddenly, and feareth not*;[f] a weapon which by no force can be resisted, by no art declined, whose impression is altogether inevitable and unsustainable. It is a most insidious, most treacherous and cowardly way of fighting; wherein manifestly the weakest and basest spirits have extreme advantage, and may easily prevail against the bravest and worthiest: for no man of honour or honesty can in way of resistance or requital deign to use it, but must infallibly without repugnance be borne down thereby. By it the vile practiser achieveth the greatest mischief that can be. His words are, as the Psalmist saith of Doeg, *devouring words* (*Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue*:[g]) and, *A man* (saith the Wise Man) *that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*;[h] that is, he is a complicated instrument of all mischiefs: he smiteth and bruiseth like a *maul*, he cutteth and pierceth like a *sword*; he thus doth hurt near at hand, and at a distance he woundeth like a *sharp arrow*; it is hard anywhere to evade him, or to get out of his reach. *Many* (saith another wise man, the imitator of Solomon) *have fallen by the edge of the sword: but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof; who hath not drawn the yoke thereof, nor hath been bound in its bands. For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass. The death thereof is an evil death, the grave were better than it.*[i] Incurable are the wounds which the slanderer inflicteth, irreparable the damages which he causeth, indelible the marks which he leaveth. *No balsam can heal the biting of a sycophant*;* no thread can stitch up a good name torn by calum-

[c] Eph. iv. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 1; Psal. xxxi. 5; xxv. 10; lxxxvi. 15; lxxxix. 14; cxlvi. 6; Prov. xii. 22; vi. 17.

[d] Levit. xix. 18.

[e] Prov. xxvi. 28.

* Adversus sycophantæ morsum nullum est remedium.

[f] James iii. 8; Psal. lxiv. 3, 4; lvii. 4.

[g] Psal. lii. 4.

[h] Prov. xxv. 18; xii. 6,—An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is a burning fire. Prov. xvi. 27.

[i] Ecclus. xxviii. 18, &c.

nious defamation; no soap is able to cleanse from the stains aspersed by a foul mouth. *Aliquid adhærebit;* somewhat always of suspicion and ill opinion will stick in the minds of those who have given ear to slander. So extremely opposite is this practice unto the queen of virtues, *charity*. Its property indeed is to *believe all things*,[k] that is, all things for the best, and to the advantage of our neighbour; not so much as to suspect any evil of him, without unavoidably manifest cause: how much more not to devise any falsehood against him? It covereth all things, studiously conniving at real defects, and concealing assured miscarriages:[l] how much more not divulging imaginary or false scandals! It disposeth to seek and further any the least good concerning him: how much more will it hinder committing grievous outrage upon his dearest good name?

Again, all injustice is abominable: to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime; that crime, which of all most immediately tendeth to the dissolution of society, and disturbance of human life; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. And of this the slanderer is most deeply guilty. *A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity*,[m] saith the Wise Man. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds whatever of injury, breaking all the second table of commands respecting our neighbour. Most formally and directly he *beareth false witness against his neighbour;* he doth *covet his neighbour's goods:* for 'tis constantly out of such an irregular desire, for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbour of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale: he is ever a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an assassin and murderer of his honour.* So doth he violate all the rules of justice, and perpetrateth all sorts of wrong against his neighbour.

He may indeed perhaps conceive it no great matter that he committeth; because he doth not act in so boisterous and bloody a way, but only by words, which are subtile, slim, and transient things; upon his neighbour's credit only, which is no substantial or visible matter. He draweth, thinks he, no blood, nor breaketh any bones, nor impresseth any remarkable scar: 'tis only the soft air he breaketh with his tongue, 'tis only a slight character that he stampeth on the fancy, 'tis only an imaginary stain that he daubeth his neighbour with: therefore he supposeth no great wrong done, and seemeth to himself innocent, or very excusable. But these conceits arise from great inconsiderateness, or mistake; nor can they excuse the slanderer from grievous injustice. For in dealing with our neighbour, and meddling with his property, we are not to value things according to our fancy, but according to the price set on them by the owner: we must not reckon that a trifle, which he prizeth as a jewel. Since then all men (especially men of honour and honesty) do, from a necessary instinct of nature, estimate their good name beyond any of their goods, yea do commonly hold it more dear and precious than their very lives; we, by violently or fraudulently bereaving them of it, do them no less wrong, than if we should rob or cozen them of their substance, yea, than if we should maim their body, or spill their blood, or even stop their breath. If they as grievously feel it, and resent it as deeply, as they do any other outrage, the injury is really as great to them. Even the slanderer's own judgment and conscience might tell him so much: for they who most slight another's fame, are usually very tender of their own, and can with no patience endure that others should touch it: which demonstrates the inconsiderateness of their judgment, and the iniquity of their practice. It is an injustice not to be corrected or cured. Thefts may be restored, wounds may be cured; but there is no restitution or cure of a lost good name: it is therefore an irreparable injury.

Nor is the thing itself, in true judgment, contemptible; but in itself really

* Dei episcopos linguæ gladio jugulastis, fundentes sanguinem non corporis, sed honoris.—*Op*, lib. ii. Wo be to them who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.—Isa. v. 23.

[k] 1 Cor. xiii. 7. [l] Prov. xvii. 9.

[m] Prov. xix. 28.

very considerable. *A good name*, saith Solomon himself (no fool) *is rather to be chosen than great riches; and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*[n] In its consequences it is much more so; the chief interests of a man, the success of his affairs, his ability to do good (for himself, his friends, his neighbour), his safety, the best comforts and conveniences of his life, sometimes his life itself, depending thereon:[o] so that whoever doth snatch or filch it from him, doth not only according to his opinion, and in moral value, but in real effect, commonly rob, sometimes murder, even exceedingly wrong his neighbour. It is often the sole reward of a man's virtue and all the fruit of his industry; so that by depriving him of that, he is robbed of all his estate, and left stark naked of all, excepting a good conscience, which is beyond the reach of the world, and which no malice or misfortune can divest him of. Full then of iniquity, full of uncharitableness, full of all wickedness, is this practice; and consequently full it is of folly. No man, one would think, of any tolerable sense, should dare, or deign to incur the guilt of a practice so vile and base, so indeed diabolical and detestable. But further more particularly,

2. The slanderer is plainly a fool; because he maketh wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly driveth on silly bargains for himself, in result whereof he proveth a great loser. He means by his calumnious stories either to vent some passion boiling in him, or to compass some design which he affects, or to please some humour that he is possessed with: but is any of these things worth purchasing at so dear a rate? Can there be any valuable exchange for our honesty? Is it not more advisable to suppress our passions, or to let it evaporate otherwise, than to discharge it in so foul a way? Is it not better to let go a petty interest, than to further it by committing so notorious and heinous a sin; to let an ambitious project sink, than to buoy it up by such base means? Is it not wisdom rather to smother, or curb our humour, than by satisfying it thus, to forfeit our innocence? Can any thing in the world be so considerable, that for its sake we should defile our souls by so foul a practice, making shipwreck of a good conscience, abandoning honour and honesty, incurring all the guilt and all the punishment due to so enormous a crime? Is it not far more wisdom, contentedly to see our neighbour to enjoy credit and success, to flourish and thrive in the world, than by such base courses to sully his reputation, to rifle him of his goods, to supplant or cross him in his affairs? We do really, when we think thus to depress him, and to climb up to wealth or credit by the ruins of his honour, but debase ourselves. Whatever comes of it (whether he succeeds or is disappointed therein), assuredly he that useth such courses will himself be the greatest loser and deepest sufferer. 'Tis true which the Wise Man saith, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*[p] And, *Wo unto them* (saith the Prophet) *that draw iniquity with cords of vanity;*[q] that is, who by falsehood endeavour to compass unjust designs.

But it is not, perhaps he will pretend, for to assuage a private passion, or to promote his particular concernment, that he makes so bold with his neighbour, or deals so harshly with him; but for the sake of orthodox doctrine, for advantages of the true church, for the advancement of public good, he judgeth it expedient to asperse him. This indeed is the covert of innumerable slanders: zeal for some opinion, or some party, beareth out men of sectarian and factious spirit in such practices; they may do, they may say, anything for those fine ends. What is a little truth, what is any man's reputation, in comparison to the carrying on such brave designs? But (to omit that men do usually prevaricate in these cases; that it is not commonly for love of truth, but of themselves, not so much for the benefit of their sect, but for their own interest, that they calumniate) this plea will nowise justify such practice. For truth and sincerity, equity and candour, meekness and charity are inviolably to be observed, not only toward dissenters in opinion, but even toward declared enemies of truth itself; we are to *bless them* (that is, to speak well of them, and to wish well to them) *not to curse them* (that is, not

[n] Prov. xxii. 1; xv. 30; Eccles. vii. 1.
[o] Prov. xii. 6.
[p] Prov. xxi. 6.
[q] Isa. v. 18.

to reproach them, or to wish them ill, much less to belie them.) Truth also, as it cannot ever need, so doth it always loathe and scorn the patronage and the succour of lies; it is able to support and protect itself by fair means; it will not be killed upon a pretence of saving it, or thrive by its own ruin. Nor indeed can any party be so much strengthened and underpropt, as it will be weakened and undermined, by such courses: no cause can stand firm upon a bottom so loose and slippery as falsehood is: all the good a slanderer can do is to disparage what he would maintain. In truth, no heresy can be worse than that would be, which should allow to play the devil in any case. He that can dispense with himself to slander a Jew or a Turk, doth in so doing render himself worse than either of them by profession are: for even they, and even pagans themselves, disallow the practice of inhumanity and iniquity. All men by light of nature avow truth to be honorable, and faith to be indispensably observed. He doth not understand what it is to be Christian, or careth not to practise according thereto, who can find in his heart, in any case, upon any pretence, to calumniate. In fine, to prostitute our conscience, or sacrifice our honesty, for any cause, to any interest whatever, can never be warrantable or wise. Further,

3. The slanderer is a fool, because he useth improper means and preposterous methods of effecting his purposes. As there is no design worth the carrying on by ways of falsehood and iniquity; so is there scarce any (no good or lawful one at least) which may not more surely, more safely, more cleverly be achieved by means of truth and justice. Is not always the straight way more short than the oblique and crooked? Is not the plain way more easy than the rough and cragged? Is not the fair way more pleasant and passable than the foul? Is it not better to walk in paths that are open and allowed, than in those that are shut up and prohibited? than to clamber over walls, to break through fences, to trespass upon enclosures? Surely yes: *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.*[r] Using strict veracity and integrity, candour, and equity, is the best method of accomplishing good designs. Our own industry, good use of the parts and faculties God hath given us, embracing fair opportunities, God's blessing and providence, are sufficient means to rely upon for procuring in an honest way, whatever is convenient for us. These are ways approved, and amiable to all men; they procure the best friends, and fewest enemies; they afford to the practiser a cheerful courage, and good hope; they meet with less disappointment, and have no regret or shame attending them. He that hath recourse to the other base means, and *maketh lies his refuge*, as he renounceth all just and honest means, as he declaimeth all hope in God's assistance, and forfeiteth all pretence to his blessing;[s] so he cannot reasonably expect good success, or be satisfied in any undertaking. The supplanting way indeed seems the most curt and compendious way of bringing about dishonest or dishonourable designs: but as a good design is certainly dishonoured thereby, so is it apt thence to be defeated; it raising up enemies and obstacles, yielding advantages to whoever is disposed to cross us. As in trade it is notorious, that the best course to thrive is by dealing squarely and truly; and fraud or cozenage appearing there doth overthrow a man's credit, and drive away custom from him: so in all other transactions, as he that dealeth justly and fairly will have his affairs proceed roundly, and shall find men ready to comply with him; so he that is observed to practise falsehood will be declined by some, opposed by others, disliked by all: no man scarce willingly will have to do with him; he is commonly forced to stand out in business, as one that plays foul play.

4. Lastly, The slanderer is a very fool, as bringing many great inconveniences, troubles, and mischiefs on himself.

First, *A fool's mouth* (saith the Wise Man) *is his destruction, his lips are the snare of his soul*:[t] and if any kind of speech is destructive and dangerous, then is this certainly most of all: for by no means can a man inflame so fierce anger, impress so stiff hatred, raise so deadly enmity against himself, and consequently so endanger his safety, ease, and welfare,

[r] Prov. x. 9.

[s] Isa. xxviii. 15, 17; Jer. xxviii. 15.

[t] Prov. xviii. 7; xiii. 3; xviii. 21.

as by this practice. Men can more easily endure, and sooner will forgive, any sort of abuse than this; they will rather pardon a robber of their goods, than a defamer of their good name.

Secondly, Such an one indeed is not only odious to the person immediately concerned, but generally to all men that observe his practice, every man presently will be sensible how easily it may be his own case, how liable he may be to be thus abused, in a way against which there is no guard or defence. The slanderer therefore is apprehended a common enemy, dangerous to all men; and thence rendereth all men averse from him, and ready to cross him.* Love and peace, tranquillity and security, can only be maintained by innocent and true dealing: so the Psalmist hath well taught us: *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*[u]

Thirdly, All wise, all noble, all ingenuous and honest persons have an aversation from this practice, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence. *A righteous man hateth lying*,[v] saith the Wise Man. It is only ill-natured and ill-nurtured, unworthy and naughty people, that are willing auditors or encouragers thereof. *A wicked doer* (saith the Wise Man again) *giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.*[w] All love of truth, and regard to justice, and sense of humanity, all generosity and ingenuity, all charity and good-will to men, must be extinct in those who can with delight, or indeed with patience, lend an ear, or give any countenance to a slanderer: and is not he a very fool, who chooseth to displease the best, only soothing the worst of men?

Fourthly, The slanderer indeed doth banish himself from all conversation and company, or, intruding into it, becomes very disgustful thereto: for he worthily is not only looked upon as an enemy to those whom he slandereth, but to those also upon whom he obtrudeth his calumnious discourse. He not only wrongeth the former by the injury, but he mocketh the latter by the falsehood of his stories; implicitly charging his hearers with weakness and credulity, or with injustice and pravity.

Fifthly, He also derogateth wholly from his own credit, in all matters of discourse. For he that dareth thus to injure his neighbour, who can trust him in any thing he speaks? What will not he say to please his vile humour, or further his base interest? What (thinks any man) will he scruple or boggle at, who hath the heart in thus doing wrong and mischief to imitate the Devil? Farther,

Sixthly, This practice is perpetually haunted with most troublesome companions, inward regret and self-condemnation, fear and disquiet: the conscience of dealing so unworthily doth smite and rack him; he is ever in danger, and thence in fear to be discovered, and requited for it.* Of these passions the manner of his behaviour is a manifest indication: for men do seldom vent their slanderous reports openly and loudly, to the face, or in the ear of those who are concerned in them; but do utter them in a low voice, in dark corners, out of sight and hearing, where they conceit themselves at present safe from being called to an account. *Swords* (saith the Psalmist of such persons) *are in their lips; Who, say they, doth hear?* And, *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off*,[x] saith David again, intimating the common manner of this practice. Calumny is like *the plague, that walketh in darkness.*[y] Hence appositely are the practisers thereof termed whisperers and backbiters: their heart suffers them not openly to avow, their conscience tells them they cannot fairly defend their practice. Again,

Seventhly, The consequent of this practice is commonly shameful disgrace, with an obligation to retract, and render satisfaction; for seldom doth calumny pass long without being detected and confuted.[z] *He that walketh uprightly*,

* ——— ecquid
Ad te post paulo ventura pericula sentis?
Hor. lib. i. Ep. 18.
——sibi quisque timet, quanquam est intactus et odit. *Idem.*

[u] Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13. [v] Prov. xiii. 5.
[w] Prov. xvii. 4.

* Ὁ κακῶς εἰπὼν ἐναγώνιος λοιπὸν ἐστιν, ὑποπτεύει τε, καὶ δέδοικε, καὶ μετανοεῖ, καὶ κατεσθίει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶτταν, δεδοικὼς, καὶ τρέμων, μήποτε εἰς ἑτέρους ἐξενεχθὲν τὸ βῆμα μέγαν ἐπαγάγῃ τὸν κίνδυνον, καὶ περιττὴν ἔχθραν καὶ ἀνόνητον ἐργάσηται τοῖς εἰρηκόσι, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. γ΄.

[x] Psal. lix. 7; ci. 5. [y] Psal. xci. 6.
[z] Psal. lxiii. 11,—The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known: and, *The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying lip is but for a moment*,[a] saith the great observer of things.[b] And when the slander is disclosed, the slanderer is obliged to excuse (that is, to palliate one lie with another, if he can do it), or forced to recant, with much disgrace and extreme displeasure to himself: he is also many times constrained, with his loss and pain, to repair the mischief he hath done.

Eighthly, To this in likelihood the concernments of men, and the powers which guard justice, will forcibly bring him: and certainly his conscience will bind him thereto; God will indispensably exact it from him. He can never have any sound quiet in his mind, he can never expect pardon from Heaven, without acknowledging his fault, repairing the wrong he hath done, restoring that good name of which he dispossessed his neighbour: for in this no less than in other cases conscience cannot be satisfied, remission will not be granted, except due restitution be performed: and of all restitutions this surely is the most difficult, most laborious, and most troublesome. It is nowise so hard to restore goods stolen or extorted, as to recover a good opinion lost, to wipe off aspersions cast on a man's name, to cure a wounded reputation: the most earnest and diligent endeavour can hardly ever effect this, or spread the plaster so far as the sore hath reached. The slanderer therefore doth engage himself into great straits, incurring an obligation to repair an almost irreparable mischief.

Ninthly, This practice doth also certainly revenge itself, imposing on its actor a perfect retaliation; *a tooth for a tooth;* an irrecoverable infamy to himself, for the infamy he causeth to others. Who will regard his fame, who will be concerned to excuse his faults, who so outrageously abuseth the reputation of others? He suffereth justly, he is paid in his own coin, will any man think, who doth hear him reproached.[c]

Tenthly, In fine, the slanderer (if he doth not by serious and sore repentance retract his practice) doth banish himself from heaven and happiness, doth expose himself to endless miseries and sorrows. For if none that *maketh a lie shall enter into the heavenly city:* if *without* those mansions of joy and bliss *every one* must enternally abide *that loveth or maketh a lie;* if, πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσι, *to all liars their portion is* assigned *in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone;*[d] then assuredly the capital liar, the slanderer (who lieth most injuriously and mischievously), shall be far excluded from felicity and thrust down into the depth of that miserable place. If, as St. Paul saith, no *railer*, or evil speaker *shall inherit the kingdom of God;*[e] how far thence shall they be removed, who without any truth or justice do speak ill of and reproach their neighbour? If for every ἀργὸν ῥῆμα, *idle*, or vain, *word* we must *render a* strict *account;*[f] how much more shall we be severely reckoned with for this sort of words, so empty of truth and void of equity; words that are not only negatively vain, or useless, but positively vain, as false, and spoken to bad purpose? If slander perhaps here may evade detection, or scape deserved punishment; yet infallibly hereafter, at the dreadful day, it shall be disclosed, irreversibly condemned, inevitably persecuted with condign reward of utter shame and sorrow.

Is not he, then, he who, out of malignity, or vanity, to serve any design, or soothe any humour in himself or others, doth by committing this sin involve himself into all these great evils, both here

[a] Prov. x. 9.

[b] Prov. xii. 19; (Prov. xxvi. 26,)—Refrain your tongue from backbiting; for there is no word so secret that shall go for nought; and the mouth that slandereth, slayeth the soul.—Wisd. i. 11. Et delator habet quod dedit exitium.—Vide *Tac. An.* i. p. 45.

[c] He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour; but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.—Prov. xi. 27; xxvi. 27. It was the punishment of slanderers in the Law:—Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother.—Deut. xix. 19. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that telleth lies shall not escape.—Prov. xix. 5. God shall destroy thee for ever, thou false tongue.—Psal. lii. 4, 5. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight.—Prov. xii. 22.

[d] Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 15; xxi. 8. It is one of those things which God especially doth abominate.—Prov. vi. 19; xii. 22. A false witness shall perish.—Prov. xxi. 28.

[e] 1 Cor. vi. 10; v. 11. [f] Matt. vii. 36.

and hereafter, a most desperate and deplorable fool?

Having thus described the nature of this sin, and declared the folly thereof, we need, I suppose, to say no more for dissuading it; especially to persons of a generous and honest mind, who cannot but scorn to debase and defile themselves by so mean and vile a practice; or to those who seriously do profess Christianity, that is, the religion which peculiarly above all others prescribeth constant truth, strictest justice, and highest charity.

I shall only add, that since our faculty of speech (wherein we do excel all other creatures) was given us, as in the first place to praise and glorify our Maker, so in the next to benefit and help our neighbour; as an instrument of mutual succour and delectation, of friendly commerce and pleasant converse together; for instructing and advising, comforting and cheering one another; it is an unnatural perverting, and an irrational abuse thereof, to employ it to the damage, disgrace, vexation, or wrong in any kind, of our brother. Better indeed had we been as brutes without its use, than we are, if so worse than brutishly we abuse it.

Finally, All these things being considered, we may, I think, reasonably conclude it most evidently true, that *he which uttereth slander is a fool.*

SERMON XIX.

AGAINST DETRACTION.

JAMES iv. 11.—*Speak not evil one of another, brethren.*

ONE half of our religion consisteth in charity toward our neighbour;* and of that charity, much the greater part seemeth exercised in speech; for as speaking doth take up the greatest part of our life (our quick and active mind continually venting its thoughts, and discharging its passions thereby; all our conversation and commerce passing through it, it having a large influence upon all our practice), so speech commonly having our neighbour and his concernments for its objects, it is necessary that either most of our charity will be employed therein, or that by it we shall most offend against that great duty, together with its associates, justice and peace.

And all offences of this kind (which transgress charity, violate justice, or infringe peace) may perhaps be forbidden in this apostolical precept; for the word καταλαλεῖν, according to its origination, and according to some use, doth signify all kind of obloquy, and so may comprise slander, harsh censure, reviling, scoffing, and the like kinds of speaking against our neighbour; but in stricter acceptation, and according to peculiar use, it denoteth that particular sort of obloquy which is called *detraction*, or *backbiting:* so therefore we may be allowed to understand it here; and accordingly I now mean to describe it, and to dissuade from its practice.

There is between this and the other chief sorts of obloquy (slander, censuring, and reviling) much affinity, yet there is some difference; for slander involveth an imputation of falsehood; reviling includeth bitter and foul language; but detraction may be couched in truth, and clothed in fair language; it is a poison often infused in sweet liquor, and ministered in a golden cup. It is of nearer kin to censuring, and accordingly St. James here coupleth it thereto: *He that detracteth from a brother, and he that censureth his brother, backbiteth the law, and censureth the law:* yet may these two be distinguished; for censuring seemeth to be of more general purport, extending indifferently to all kinds of persons, qualities and actions, which it unduly taxeth; but detraction especially respecteth worthy persons, good qualities, and laudable actions, the reputation of which it aimeth to destroy, or to impair.

This sort of ill practice, so rife in use, so base in its nature, so mischievous in its effects, it shall be my endeavour to describe, that we may know it; and to dissuade, that we may shun it.

It is the fault (opposite to that part of charity and goodness which is called ingenuity or candour) which, out of naughty disposition or design, striveth to disgrace worthy persons, or to disparage good actions, looking for blemishes and defects in them, using care and artifice

* Μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων, ἀδελφοί

to pervert or misrepresent things to that purpose.

An honest and charitable mind disposeth us, when we see any man endued with good qualities, and pursuing a tenor of good practice, to esteem such a person, to commend him, to interpret what he doeth to the best, not to suspect any ill of him, or to seek any exception against him; it inclineth us, when we see any action materially good, to yield it simply due approbation and praise, without searching for, or surmising any defect in the cause or principle whence it cometh, in the design or end to which it tendeth, in the way or manner of performing it. A good man would be sorry to have any good thing spoiled: as to find a crack in a fair building, a flaw in a fine jewel, a canker in a goodly flower, is grievous to any indifferent man; so would it be displeasing to him to observe defects in a worthy person, or commendable action; he therefore will not easily entertain a suspicion of any such, he never will hunt for any. But, on the contrary, it is the property of a detractor, when he seeth a worthy person, whom he doth not affect, or whom he is concerned to wrong, to survey him thoroughly, and to sift all his actions, with intent lo descry some failing, or any semblance of a fault, by which he may disparage him; when he vieweth any good action, he peereth into it, labouring to espy some pretence to derogate from the commendation apparently belonging to it. This in general is the nature of this fault. But we may get a fuller understanding of it, by considering more distinctly some particular acts, wherein it is commonly exercised, or the several paths in which the detracting spirit treadeth; such are these following:—

1. A detractor is wont to represent persons and actions under the most disadvantageous circumstances he can, setting out those which may cause them to appear odious or despicable, slipping over those which may commend or excuse them. There is no person so excellent, who is not by his circumstances forced to omit some things, which would become him to do, if he was able; to perform some things lamely, and otherwise than he would do, if he could reach it; no action so worthy, but may have some defect in matter, or manner, incapable of redress; and he that representeth such person or action, leaving out those excusing circumstances, doth tend to beget a bad or mean opinion of them, robbing them of their due value and commendation:* thus, to charge a man of not having done a good work, when he had not the power or opportunity to perform it, or is by cross accidents hindered from doing it according to his desire; to suggest the action was not done exactly, in the best season, in the rightest mode, in the most proper place, with expressions, looks, or gestures most convenient: these are tricks of a detractor; who when he cannot deny the metal to be good, and the stamp true, he clippeth it, and so would reject it from being current.

2. He is wont to misconstrue ambiguous words, or to misinterpret doubtful appearances of things: let a man speak never so well, or act never so fairly, yet a detractor will say his words may bear this ill sense, his actions may tend to that bad purpose; we may therefore suspect his meaning, and cannot yield him a full approbation.

3. He is wont to misname the qualities of persons or things, assigning bad appellations or epithets to good or indifferent qualities: the names of virtue and vice do so nearly border in signification, that it is easy to transfer them from one to another, and to give the best quality a bad name.† Thus by calling a sober man sour, a cheerful man vain, a conscientious man morose, a devout man superstitious, a free man prodigal, a frugal man sordid, an open man simple, a reserved man crafty, one that standeth upon his honour and honesty proud, a kind man ambitiously popular, a modest man sullen, timorous, or stupid, is a very easy way to detract, and no man thereby can escape being disparaged.

4. He doth imperfectly characterize persons, so as studiously to veil or faintly to disclose their virtues and good qualities, but carefully to expose, and fully to aggravate or amplify any defects or failings

* Πολὺ τὸ οὐχ ὑπακοῦον, οὐδὲ δεξάμενον τὸ εὖ..— Theoph.

† At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque
Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis
Nobiscum vivit? multum est demissus homo. Illi
Tardo cognomen pinguis damus, &c.,
Hor. Serm. i. 3.

in them. The detractor will pretend to give a character of his neighbour; but in so doing he stifleth what may commend him, and blazoneth what may disgrace him; like an envious painter he hideth, or in dusky colours shadoweth, all the graceful parts and goodly features, but setteth out all blemishes in the briskest light, and most open view. Every face hath in it some mole, spot, or wrinkle; there is no man that hath not, as they speak, some blind place, some blemishes in his nature or temper, some faults contracted by education or custom, somewhat amiss proceeding from ignorance, or misapprehension of things: these (although they be in themselves small and inconsiderable, although they are some of them involuntary, and thence inculpable, although they be much corrected or restrained by virtuous discipline, although they are compensated by greater virtues, yet these) the detractor snatcheth, moulds, and out of them frameth an idea of his neighbour, apt to breed hatred or contempt of him in an unwary spectator; whereas were charity, were equity, were humanity, to draw the person, it, representing his qualities with just advantage, would render him lovely and venerable.

5. He is wont not to commend or allow any thing absolutely and clearly, but always interposing some exception, to which he would have it seem liable; the man indeed, saith he, doth seem to have this or that laudable quality; the action hath a fair appearance: but then if he can, he blurteth out some spiteful objection; if he can find nothing colourable to say against it, yet he will seem to know and to suppress somewhat; but, saith he, I know what I know, I know more than I'll say;—so (adding perhaps a crafty nod or shrug, a malicious sneer or smile) he thinks to blast the fairest performance.*

6. He is ready to suggest ill causes and principles, latent in the heart: of practices apparently good, ascribing what is well done to bad disposition, or bad purpose: so to say of a liberal man, that he is so from an ambitious temper, or out of a vain-glorious design; of a religious man, that his constant exercises of devotion proceed not from a conscientious love and fear of God, or out of intention to please God and work out his salvation; but from hypocrisy, from affectation to gain the favour and good opinion of men, from design to promote worldly interests; this is the way of detraction. He doeth well, saith the detractor, it cannot be denied; but for what reason doeth he so? It is not plainly his interest to do so? Doth he not mean to get applause or preferment thereby? *Doth Job serve God for nought?* So said the father of detracting spirits.

7. He derogateth from good actions by pretending to correct them, or to show better that might have been done in their room: it is, saith he, done in some respect well, or tolerably; but it might have been done better, with as small trouble and cost; he was overseen in choosing this way, or proceeding in this manner. Thus did Judas blame the good woman, who anointed our Lord's feet: *Why* (said he) *was not this ointment sold, and given to the poor?*[a] So did his covetous baseness prompt him to detract from that performance, of which our Saviour's goodness did pronounce, that it was a *good work*, which should perpetually *through the whole world* pass for *memorable*.[b]

8. A detractor not regarding the general course and constant tenor of a man's conversation, which is conspicuously and clearly good, will attack some part of it, the goodness whereof is less discernible, or more subject to contest and blame; as if in a body admirably handsome, one overlooking that curious harmony, that delicate complexion, those fine lineaments and goodly features, which, running through the whole, do conspire to render it a lovely spectacle, should pitch on an eye or a nose to carp at; or as if in a town, otherwhere begirt with impregnable defences, one should search for the weakest place, to form a battery against it.

9. In fine, the detractor injecteth suggestions of every thing anywise plausible or possible, that can serve to diminish the worth of a person, or value of an action, which he would discountenance: he pryeth into every nook, he bolteth every circumstance, he improveth every pretence,

* Non audes repetere, qui tacendo amplius criminaris; et quia non habes quod objicias, simulas verecundiam; ut lector te putet mihi parcere, qui mentiens nec tuæ animæ pepercisti.—*Hier. in Ruff.* iii. 6.

[a] John xii. 5. [b] Matt. xxvi. 10, 13.

he allegeth any report or rumour, he useth all the tricks imaginable to that end. Such is the nature and way of detraction: in enlarging upon which I am the more sparing, because the arts and methods of detraction being in a great part common with those of slander and censure, I have otherwhile in treating upon those offences more fully declared them.

Now for dissuading from its practice, I shall propound to your consideration the causes whence it proceedeth, the irregularities and pravities which it involveth, the effects which it produceth; the which will appear so base and ugly, that whoever shall consider them cannot, I suppose, but loathe the daughter of such parents, the subject of such qualities, and the mother of such children.

I. The causes of detraction are,

1. Ill nature, and bad humour: as good nature and ingenious disposition incline men to observe, like, and commend what appeareth best in our neighbour; so malignity of temper and heart prompteth to espy and catch at the worst: one, as a bee, gathereth honey out of any herb; the other, as a spider, sucketh poison out of the sweetest flower.

2. Pride, ambition, and inordinate self-love: the detractor would engross praise, and derive all glory to himself; he would be the chief, the only excellent person; therefore he would jostle another's worth out of the way, that it may not endanger standing in competition with his, or lessening it by a partnership; that it may not outshine his reputation, or dim it by the lustre thereof.*

3. Envy: a detractor liketh not to see another thrive, and flourish in the good esteem of men, therefore he would gladly blast his worth and virtue; his *eye* is *evil* and sore, therefore would he quench, or cloud the light that dazzleth it.

4. Malicious revenge and spite: his neighbour's good practice condemneth his bad life; his neighbour's worth disparageth his unworthiness; this he conceiveth highly prejudicial to him; hence in revenge he will labour to vilify the worth and good works of his neighbour.

5. Sense of weakness, want of courage, or despondency of his own ability: he that in any kind deemeth himself able, or confideth in his own strength and industry, will allow to others the commendation beseeming their ability;* for he thinketh himself in capacity to deserve the same, and as he would not lose the fruits of his own deserts, so he taketh it for equitable that another should enjoy them; to deprive another of them he seeth were in consequence to prejudice his own capacity and hope: but he that feeleth himself destitute of worth, and despaireth to arrive to the credit of others, is thence tempted to disparage and defame such persons: this course he taketh as the best allay of his contemptibleness, the only solace for his defects that he can hope for; seeing he cannot arise to another's pitch, he would bring down that other to his; he cannot directly get any praise, therefore he would indirectly find excuse, by shrouding his unworthiness under the blame of others. Hence detraction is a sign of the weakest and basest spirit; it is an impotent and groveling serpent, that lurketh in the hedge, waiting opportunity to bite the heel of any nobler creature that passeth by.

6. Evil conscience: a man that is conscious to himself of a solid worth and virtue, of having honest intentions, of having performed good deeds, is satisfied with the fruits of inward comfort and outward approbation, which they do yield; he therefore will scorn to seek the bettering himself by the discredit of others; he will not by so mean a practice adulterate that worth, in which he feeleth sufficient complacence;† he rather doth like that others should enjoy their due commendation, as justifying his own claim thereto; he willingly payeth it, because he may justly demand it; and because withholding it from another may prejudice his own right thereto: but he that is sensible of no good qualities in himself, that is conscious of no worthy actions that he hath done, to breed a satisfaction of mind, or build a reputation upon, would please himself in making

* Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum, quasi aliena virtus exprobratio vestrorum delictorum sit.—*Sen. de Vit.* B. XIX.

* Οἱ εὐτελεῖς καὶ ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν μὴ δυνάμενοι φαίνεσθαι, ἐκ τοῦ ψέγειν τοὺς ἑαυτῶν κρείττονας δείκνυσθαι βούλονται.—Socr. Hist. Eccl. vi. 13.

† Remedium pœnæ suæ arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus, si omnibus detrahatur, si turba sit peccantium, si multitudo peccantium.—*Hier. ad Asellam.* Ep. 99.

others as little better than himself as he can, would ground a kind of credit upon the ruins and rubbish of another's fame. When he knoweth he cannot shine by his own light, he would seem less obscure by eclipsing the brightness of others, and shutting out the day from about him; conceiving that all things look alike in the dark, and that bad appeareth not bad where no good is near.

As also a good man liketh worth and virtue, because they resemble what he discerneth in himself; so evil men hate them, because they do not find themselves masters of them: they are like the fox, who said the grapes were sour, because he could not reach them; and that the hare was dry meat, because he could not catch her. A detractor therefore is always a bad man, and wanteth those good qualities which he would disparage.

7. Bad, selfish design: detraction is a common engine whereby naughty men strive to compass their ends; when by fair means, by their own wit, industry, courage, worthy behaviour, they cannot promote their interest, they cannot drive on their ambitious or covetous projects, they cannot attain that preferment or that gain which they affect, then they betake themselves to this crooked and foul way of supplanting, by detracting those whom they conceit to stand in the way of their designs. It was the first piece of wicked policy that ever was practised in the world: the devil, by detracting from the goodness and veracity of God (misrepresenting his intentions, and misconstruing his commands), strove to achieve his mischievous design of seducing our forefathers; and in his footsteps his serpentine progeny (the race of malicious, envious, ambitiuos, covetous, and crafty politicians) do tread. It is observed to be a fault that usually haunteth courts, wherein there is competition for the favour of a prince, and the consequences thereof (for dignity, power, wealth, repute), to get which to themselves they strive to dispossess or prevent others by this instrument of detraction. It is also rife among scholars, that is, among competitors for wit, learning, industry, and the rewards of them, reputation or preferment. From such principles and causes usually doth this practice spring.

II. It doth involve these kinds of irregularity and pravity:—

1. Injustice: a detractor careth not how he dealeth with his neighbour, what wrong he doeth him. Justice obligeth to render every man his due: *honour to whom honour is due*, and praise to him that deserveth praise. There can be no greater injury done a man, than to spoil his best good, his virtue; than to rob him of the best reward of his pains and cares, which is a fair reputation (I speak of rewards which lie in the reach of men.) No man prizes any thing comparably to his honesty and honour; who therefore by any means blurreth them, is most injurious.[c] *Wo unto them—who take the righteousness of the righteous from him.* Isa. v. 23.

Injurious indeed he is, not only to the virtuous person, but to virtue itself; for commendation is a debt we owe to it, wherever it is found; which conduceth to its encouragement and advancement; and to wrong goodness itself is the most heinous injustice.

2. Uncharitableness: it is evident that the detractor doth not love his neighbour; for charity maketh the best of every thing: *Charity believeth every thing, hopeth every thing*[d] to the advantage of its object; charity delighteth to see the beloved to prosper and flourish; and will therefore contribute its endeavour to the procuring it to do so: the detractor therefore (who would defile the best, and display the worst in his neighbour) can have no charity; he indeed manifesteth the greatest hatred, seeing he striveth to do the greatest mischief, to cause the greatest vexation to his neighbour, in bereaving him of his most precious and dear enjoyments.

3. Impiety: he that loveth and reverenceth God, will acknowledge and approve his goodness, in bestowing excellent gifts and graces to his brethren; when such appear, he will be afraid to disavow or disgrace them, that he may not rob God himself of the glory thence due to his favour and mercy, or through his neighbour's side wound the divine benignity: he will be ready to bless and praise God for all such emanations of his

[c] Prov. xvii. 15. [d] 1 Cor. xiii.

goodness; as those did in the gospel, who, beholding our Saviour's miraculous works of grace, did *glorify God, who had given such gifts unto men:* but the detractor careth not for that; he feareth not to bereave God of the honour of dispensing good gifts, that his brother may not have the honour of receiving them; he will rather deny God to be good, than allow a man to be so by his grace and blessing: so is he no less a detractor from God, than from his neighbour.

Hence, of all offences, detraction certainly must be most odious to God. He is the God of truth, and therefore detesteth lying, of which detraction ever, especially in moral esteem, hath a spice: he is the God of Justice, and therefore especially doth abhor wronging the best persons and actions; he is the God of love, and therefore cannot but loathe this capital violation of charity: he is jealous of his glory, and cannot therefore endure it to be abused by sluring his good gifts and graces; he cannot but hate that offence, which approacheth to that most heinous and unpardonable sin, that consisteth in defaming the excellent works performed by divine power and goodness, ascribing them to bad causes.[e]

4. Detraction involveth degenerous baseness, meanness of spirit, and want of good manners. All men affect to seem generous, and will say they scorn to be base; but generosity is in nothing more seen, than in a candid estimation of other men's virtues and good qualities: to this generosity of nature, generosity of education, generosity of principles and judgment, do all conspiringly dispose: it is the noblest kind of courtesy, to tender and further the reputation of others; to be liberal in bestowing commendation on deserving persons: it obligeth men more than any other benefit can do, procuring them commonly real advantage, always cheering and satisfying their mind; for in nothing more do they please themselves, than in reaping this fruit of their good intention and honest industry, the approbation of worthy men; it is therefore a most genteel thing thus to oblige men. But, on the other side, nothing more plainly argueth a degenerate and ignoble heart, ill-breeding and ill-formed manners, a sorry mind and poor judgment, than to disesteem or disparage worth and virtue in others: it is the most savage rudeness, the most sordid illiberality, the most ugly clownishness, that can be; of all men, therefore, it most doth misbecome those who pretend to be gentlemen.

5. In consequence to these things, detraction includeth folly; for every unjust, every uncharitable, every impious, every base person is, as such, a fool: none of those qualities are consistent with wisdom; but the folly of it will particularly appear, together with its pravity, by the bad and hurtful effects which it produceth, both in regard to others, and to him that practiseth it; some of which are these:—

III. 1. The practice thereof is a great discouragement and obstruction to the common practice of goodness: for many, seeing the best men thus disparaged, and the best actions vilified, are disheartened and deterred from practising virtue, especially in a conspicuous and eminent degree. Why, will many a man say, shall I be strictly good, seeing goodness is so liable to be misused, seeing thereby I shall provoke the detracting tongue, seeing my reward shall be to have a severe inquisition pass upon me, to have my life defaced, and my name bespattered? Had not I better be contented with a mediocrity and obscurity of goodness, than by a glaring lustre thereof to draw the envious eye, and kindle raging obloquy upon me? Thus men of a weaker spirit, or a bashful temper (who are not stiff and resolute in their way, who have not the heart or the face to bear up against rude assaults of their reputation), will be scared and daunted by detraction; so as consequently to be induced.

—— placare invidiam virtute relicta.—HOR.

And when thus the credit of virtue is blasted in its practisers, many will be diverted from it; so will it grow out of request, and the world will be corrupted by these agents of the *evil one*.

It were, indeed, upon this consideration, advisable and just, not to seem ever to detract; even not then when we are well assured that by speaking ill we shall not really do it; if we should discover any man to seem worthy, or to be so reputed, whom yet we discern, by standing in a nearer light, not to be truly such, having had

[e] Matt. xii.

opportunity to know his bad qualities, bad purposes, or bad deeds; yet wisdom would commonly dictate, and goodness dispose, not to mar his repute. If we should observe, without danger of mistake, any plausible action to be performed out of bad inclinations, principles, or bad designs; yet ordinarily in discretion and honesty we should let it pass with such commendation as its appearance may procure, rather than to slur it by venting our disadvantageous apprehensions about it: for it is no great harm that any man should enjoy undeserved commendation, or that a counterfeit worth should find a dissembled respect; it is but being over-just, which if it be ever a fault, can hardly be so in this case, wherein we do not expend any cost, or suffer any damage: but it may do mischief to blemish an appearance of virtue; it may be a wrong thereto, to deface its very image; the very disclosing hypocrisy doth inflict a wound on goodness, and exposeth it to scandal: for bad men thence will be prone to infer, that all virtue proceedeth from the like bad principles: so the disgrace cast on that which is spurious will redound to the prejudice of that which is most genuine: and if it be good to forbear detracting from that which is certainly false, much more is it so in regard to that which is possibly true; and far more still is it so in respect to that which is clear and sure.

2. Hence detraction is very noxious and baneful to all society; for all society is maintained in welfare by encouragement of honesty and industry; the which, when disparagement is cast upon them, will be in danger to languish and decay: whence a detractor is the worst member that can be of a society; he is a very moth, a very canker therein.

3. Detraction worketh real damage and mischief to our neighbour; it bereaveth him of that goodly reputation which is the proper reward of virtue, and the main support to the practice of it: it often really obstructeth and disappointeth his undertakings, estranging those from him, or setting them against him, who do credulously entertain it.

4. The detractor abuseth those into whose ears he instilleth his poisonous suggestions, engaging them to partake in the injuries done to worth and virtue; causing them to entertain unjust and uncharitable conceits, to practice unseemly and unworthy behaviour toward good men.

5. The detractor produceth great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself.

He raiseth against himself fierce animosity and wrath: for men that are conscious to themselves of their own honest meaning and blameless proceedings, cannot endure to be abused by unjust disparagement; hence are they stirred to boil with passion, and to discharge revenge upon the detractor.

He exposeth himself to general hatred; all good men loathe him as a base and mischievous person, and a particular enemy of theirs, always ready to wrong them; every man is apt to say, he that doth thus abuse another will be ready to serve me in like manner if I chance to come in his way, vilifying the best thing I can do: even the worst men will dislike him: for even such affect to do somewhat laudable or plausible, and would be glad to enjoy approbation for it; and cannot therefore brook those who lie in wait to rob them of the fruit of their good endeavours: so do all men worthily detest and shun the detractor, as a common enemy to goodness first, and then unto men. Further,

6. The detractor yieldeth occasion to others, and a kind of right to return the same measure upon him. If he hath in him a show of any thing laudable, men will not allow him any commendation from it; for why, conceive they, shall he receive that which he will not suffer others to enjoy? How can any man admit him to have any real worth or virtue in himself who doth not like it or treat it well in another? Hence, if a detractor hath any good in him, he much injureth himself, depriving himself of all the respect belonging thereto.

7. Again, the detractor, esteeming things according to moral possibility, will assuredly be defeated in his aims; his detraction in the close will avail nothing, but to bring trouble and shame upon himself; for God hath a particular care over innocence and goodness, so as not to let them finally to suffer: *the good man's righteousness he will bring forth as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.*[r] Wise men easily will discern the foul

[r] Psal. xxxvii. 6.

play, and will scorn it; good men ever will be ready to clear and vindicate the truth: worth, however clouded for a time, will break through all mists, and gloriously expand itself, to the confusion of its most sly opposers.

Such are the natural and obvious effects of this practice; the consideration whereof (together with the causes producing it, and the essential adjuncts which it doth involve) will, I should think, suffice to deter us from it.

I shall only adjoin one consideration, which our text suggesteth: *Speak not evil of one another, brethren*, saith the Apostle: *brethren;* that appellation doth imply a strong argument enforcing the precept: brethren, with especial tenderness of affection, should love one another, and delight in each other's good; they should tender the interest and honour of each other as their own; they should therefore by all means cherish and countenance virtue in one another, as that which promoteth the common welfare, which adorneth and illustrateth the dignity of their family. We should rejoice in the good qualities and worthy deeds of any Christian, as glorifying our common Father, as gracing our common profession, as edifying the common body whereof we are members. *Members we are one of another*, and as such should find complacence in the health and vigour of any part, from whence the whole doth receive benefit and comfort: for one brother to repine at the welfare, to malign the prosperity, to decry the merit, to destroy the reputation of another, is very unnatural; for one Christian anywise to wrong or prejudice another, is highly impious.

To conclude: it is our duty (which equity, which ingenuity, which charity, which piety, do all concurrently oblige us to,) whenever we do see any good person, or worthy deed, to yield hearty esteem, to pay due respect, gladly to congratulate the person, and willingly to commend the work; rendering withal, thanks and praise for them to the *donor of all good gifts:* unto whom, for all the good things bestowed upon us, and upon all his creatures, be for ever all glory and praise. Amen.

SERMON XX.

AGAINST RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.

MATTH. vii. 1.—*Judge not.*

THESE words, being part of our Saviour's most divine Sermon upon the Mount, contain a very short precept, but of vast use and consequence; the observance whereof would much conduce to the good of the world, and to the private quiet of each man; it interdicting a practice, which commonly produceth very mischievous and troublesome effects; a practice never rare among men, but now very rife; when, with the general causes, which ever did and ever will in some measure dispose men thereto, some special ones do concur, that powerfully incline to it.

There are innate to men an unjust pride, emboldening them to take upon them beyond what belongeth to them, or doth become them; an excessive self-love, prompting them, as to flatter themselves in their own conceit, so to undervalue others, and from vilifying their neighbours, to seek commendation to themselves; an envious malignity, which ever lusteth to be pampered with finding or making faults; many corrupt affections, springing from fleshly nature, which draw or drive men to this practice; so that in all ages it hath been very common, and never any profession hath been so much invaded, as that of the judge.

But divers peculiar causes have such an influence upon our age, as more strongly to sway men thereto: there is a wonderful affectation to seem hugely wise and witty; and how can we seem such, more than in putting on the garb and countenance of judges; scanning and passing sentence upon all persons, and all things incident? There is an extreme niceness and delicacy of conceit, which maketh us apt to relish few things, and to distaste any thing; there are dissensions in opinion, and addictedness to parties, which do tempt us, and seem to authorize us in condemning all that differ from us; there is a deep corruption of mind and manners, which engageth men in their own defence to censure others, diverting the blame from home, and shrouding their own under the covert of

other men's faults ;* there are new principles of morality and policy become current with great vogue, which allow to do or say anything subservient to our interests or designs ; which also do represent all men so bad, that, admitting them true, nothing hardly can be said ill of any man beyond truth and justice.

Hence is the world become so extremely critical and censorious, that in many places the chief employment of men, and the main body of conversation is, if we mark it, taken up in judging : every gossipping is, as it were, a court of justice ; every seat becometh a tribunal ; at every table standeth a bar, whereto all men are cited, whereat every man, as it happeneth, is arraigned and sentenced : no sublimity or sacredness of dignity, no integrity or innocence of life, no prudence or circumspection of demeanour, can exempt any person from it : not one escapeth being taxed under some scandalous name, or odious character, one or other.† Not only the outward actions and visible practices of men are judged ; but their retired sentiments are brought under trial, their inward dispositions have a verdict past on them, their final states are determined. Whole bodies of men are thus judged at once, and nothing it is in one breath to damn whole churches, at one push to throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit. All mankind in a lump is severely censured, as void of any real goodness or true virtue ; so fatally depraved as not to be corrigible by any good discipline, not to be recoverable even by the grace of God : yea God himself is hardly spared, his providence coming under the bold obloquy of those who, as the Psalmist speaketh of some in his time, whose race doth yet survive, *speak loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens.*[a]

This being too apparently the present state of things, and obvious practice of men, it were desirable that, in order to their being reclaimed, men commonly did well understand the nature of this practice, with the heinous guilt, and consequently the deadly hazard, they do incur thereby : at this purpose my discourse shall aim, wherein I shall endeavour both to describe the nature of the practice forbidden in my text, and to declâre the pravity, iniquity, and folly of it.

Judge not. As to the word, we may observe, that it being in itself, according to its primitive sense, of a middle and indifferent signification, is yet frequently in the scripture used in the worst sense ; so as to import those acts, or those effects of judgment, which pass to the disadvantage of the persons subjected thereto ; for condemnation, and for infliction of punishment : and this sense here surely the word doth principally respect, yet not so precisely as to exclude somewhat contained in the larger sense : we are so prohibted the condemning and punishing our neighbour in his good name, that withal some acts antecedent, or concomitant to those, are glanced at in the prohibition : undue application thereto, unjust proceeding therein are also signified unlawful ; for the meaning of the word and the reason of the case may be so far extended.

But for the fuller and clearer understanding of the matter, we must observe, that there are divers sorts of judging, or acts resembling judgment, which do not belong to this precept ; which it is requisite to distinguish from this judging prohibited.

1. That exercising public judgment or administering justice, is not here prohibited, I need not to insist ; that is necessary : human society could not subsist, right could not be maintained, nor peace preserved without it ; God thereby governeth the world, earthly judges being his instruments and substitutes ; such judgment is not so much the act of men, as of God himself, by whose authority, in whose name, for whose service, it is ministered. As Moses told the judges in his time, *You shall not be afraid of the face of man ; for the judgment is God's.*[b] And in numberless places of scripture this judgment is allowed and authorized ; it therefore is not touched here.

* Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum ; quasi aliena virtus exprobratio vestrorum delictorum sit.—*Sen. de Vit. B.* xix.

† Εἰς τὰ τῶν ἄλλων πολυπραγμονεῖν καὶ καταδικάζειν δαπανᾶται ἡμῖν ἅπας ὁ βίος· καὶ οὐδένα ἂν εὕροις ταχέως, οὐ βιωτικὸν ἄνδρα, οὐ μοναχὸν ταύτης ἐλεύθερον τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καίτοιγε τοσαύτης ἀπειλῆς κειμένης, αὐτῇ.—Chrys. ad den. t. vi. Orat. 42.

[a] Psal. lxxiii. 8, 9.

[b] Deut. i. 17

2. That trial and censure, although out of court, and without formal process, which any kind of superiors do exercise upon their inferiors committed to their inspection and care; such as of parents over children, masters over servants, pastors over their flock, any governors over their charge, their admonitions, reprehensions, and corrections are, to be excepted hence, as being in themselves needful and warranted, yea enjoined by God.

3. Neither are fraternal correption or friendly reproof, proceeding out of charitable design, upon clear ground, in fit season, within reasonable compass, concerned in this prohibition; this being a wholesome practice, and a duty incumbent on us: *Thou shalt* (saith the Law) *not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*[c]

4. All observing and reflecting upon our neighbour's actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expressing our minds concerning them, are not forbidden. For we are not bound perpetually to shut our eyes, or go about hoodwinked; nor to stop our ears and make ourselves deaf: and how can we forbear to think according to plain evidence? how can we resist the impressions of sense upon our minds? how can we contest notorious experience? how also, barring such apprehensions of obvious and apparent things, could we bear testimony concerning them? how could we signify our approbation or dislike of them? how could we for his amendment admonish or reprove our neighbour, as in some cases we are obliged to do?

5. We are not hence obliged to think so well of all men, as without competent knowledge always to rely upon their pretences, or to entrust our interests in their hands; for common experience acquainteth us that we may be deceived in trusting men; prudence biddeth us in matters of importance not to confide in uncertainties; wherefore we shall not be culpable for being wary in such cases: this indeed is not a positive judgment, but only a waving to declare in favour, when sufficient ground of doing so doth not appear; it is only a reasonable suspecting the posibility of miscarriage in some persons, not a downright asserting ill concerning any one man: wherefore to do it, as it suiteth discretion, so it doth not thwart justice or charity; and cannot therefore be prohibited here.

6. We are also not hence obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge well of men; accounting him for a saint, or a good man, whom we see living disorderly, or committing scandalous offences, plainly repugnant to the rules of piety, justice, or sobriety.

In fine, there are some special cases and circumstances, wherein good men excusably may in severe terms declare their resentment of manifest wickedness, especially such as is prejudicial to God's honour and public good. Of this there are divers instances, which yet hardly can be reduced to common rules, or proposed for general example; the matter being ticklish, and men being apt to pervert any liberty or pretence of this kind, by indulging to their own bad humours and passions.

These sorts of allowable judgments being excepted, it is then private, affected, needless, groundless, rash, and harsh censuring the persons or actions of our brethren; such as doth resemble not the acting of a lawful superior, of a needful witness, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, upon no good grounds, or in undue manner, which is here interdicted: the word *judging* doth well imply the nature of this fault, the manner of our proceeding therein, the grounds of its unlawfulness; neither perhaps can we better understand our duty in this matter, than by expending what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto; for thence it may plainly appear how unqualified we are to bear this office, and how unduly we execute it.

1. No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power without competent authority; that is, by delegation from superior powers, or by voluntary reference of the parties concerned. This condition we fail in, whenever without warrant from God, or special reason exacting it from us, we do pry into, scan, and tax the actions of our neighbour.[d] When, I say, we are pragmatically inquisitive into the purposes and

[c] Levit. xix. 17; Thess. v. 14.

[d] 1 Pet. iv. 15; 1 Thess. iv. 11; xxvii. 16; 1 Tim. v. 13.

proceedings of our superiors, of our equals, of those who are not subject to our charge and care, when we narrowly examine them, when we peremptorily blame them, then do we unduly exalt ourselves above them, and exercise an unwarrantable jurisdiction over them. What sense doth offer, we may receive in; what judgment reason doth extort, we may follow; what testimony public benefit requireth, we may yield; what expression charity doth call for toward our neighbour's edification, we may seasonably vent: but if we proceed further in this way, the party concerned may appeal from us as incompetent and unlawful judges of his actions or his state; we are arrogant and injurious in presuming to exercise that office.* God is the master and judge of men, and without authority from him, we must not presume to judge his servants and subjects: so we are taught by St. Paul: *Who* (saith he) *art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth:*[e] and St. James in like manner, upon the same ground, expostulateth with the censurer: *there is* (saith he) *one Lawgiver, who is able to save, or to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?*[f] Our Lord himself for this reason declined intermeddling in the affairs of men: *Who* (said he) *made me a judge or divider over you?*[g] And shall we constitute ourselves in the office, shall we seat ourselves on the tribunal, without any commission from God or call from men? How many judges, if this proviso were observed, would have their quietus! how many censurers would be voided hence!

2. A judge should be free from all prejudices and all partial affections; especially from those which are disadvantageous to the party in danger to suffer;[h] such as tempt or incline to condemn him; from ill opinion and ill-will, from anger, envy, revengefulness, contempt, and the like: for he that is possessed with these is nowise qualified to be a judge; his eyes are blinded, or distorted, or infected with bad tinctures, so that he cannot discern what is right, or that he seeth things represented in the wrong place, and under false colours; his mind is discomposed and disturbed, so that he cannot calmly and steadily apprehend or consider the just state of the case; his will is biassed, and strongly propendeth one way, so that he cannot proceed uprightly in a straight and even course: being not indifferently affected, but concerned on one side, he is become a party, or an adversary, and thence unfit to be a judge; he hath determined the cause with himself beforehand, so that no place is left to further discussion or defence;[i] wherefore before such a judge the best cause will fall, the clearest innocence shall not preserve from condemnation. He, therefore, that will undertake this office, must first divest himself of all prejudices, must rid himself of all passions, must purify himself from all corrupt inclinations, taking care not to come with a condemning mind, or a lust to punish the obnoxious party; otherwise a just exception lieth against him, and reasonably his jurisdiction may be declined.

If this rule were put in practice, there would be little censuring; for few come to it with a free and pure mind; few blame their neighbours without some pre-occupation of judgment, or some disaffection toward them.

3. A judge should never proceed in judgment, without careful examination of the cause, so as well to understand it.[j] Even those, who out of indispensable duty, or by a just power, may call others to account, are yet obliged to be wary, and never to pass sentence without due cognizance of the cause; otherwise they will judge blindly and rashly; they will either decide wrongly, or so truly, that doing it must be imputed not to their virtue, but to their fortune; often they will be mistaken, and it is luck that they are not so always: and what plainer iniquity can there be, than that the reputation or real interest of any man should be put to the arbitrement of chance; that he should be defamed, or damnified, not for a certain fault, but from an unhappy lot? As things viewed at a distance appear much different in bigness, shape, and colour, from what they are in nature and reality; so if we do not look nearly and narrowly we shall greatly misapprehend the na-

* Quid in potestatem alienam irruis? quid temerarius Dei tribunal ascendis?—*Opt.* lib. 2.

[e] Rom. xiv. 4. [f] James iv. 11.
[g] Luke xii. 14. [h] Levit. xix. 15.
[i] James ii. 1; Matt. xxii. 16; 1 Tim. v. 21.
[j] Deut. i. 16.

ture, the degrees, the right characters of things and of persons: then be our pretence to judge never so fair, yet our proceeding is unjust; then if we do unduly invade the place, it will be a great aggravation of our misdemeanour: if of our own head and pleasure we will constitute ourselves judges, yet at least we should act the judge's part, in patiently attending to, and heedfully sifting the cause: if we have not a stomach to hear, if we will not afford the care to mind what may be alleged in favour of the party concerned; if we cannot or will not scan every point and circumstance which may serve to acquit him, or to excuse and extenuate his guilt, why do we undertake to be his judges? why do we engage ourselves into the commission of so palpable injustice; yea, of so disgraceful folly? for, *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is* (saith the Wise Man) *a folly and shame unto him.*[k] This caution excludeth rash judgment, from which if men would abstain, there would be little censuring: for nothing is more ordinary, than for men to do like those of whom St. Jude saith, *Ὅσα οὐκ οἴδασι βλασφημοῦσι, they rail at what they know not;*[l] they censure persons with whom they are not thoroughly acquainted, they condemn actions whereof they do not clearly ken the reasons; they little weigh the causes and circumstances which urge or force men to do things; they stand at great distance, and yet with great assurance and peremptoriness determine how things are, as if they did see through them, and knew them most exactly.

4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but *ex allegatis et probatis*, upon good grounds, after certain proof, and upon full conviction. Not any slight conjecture, or thin surmise; any idle report, or weak pretence, is sufficient to ground a condemnation upon; the case should be irrefragably clear and sure before we determine on the worst side:* *Judge not* (saith our Lord) *according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*[m] The Jews, seeing our Lord cure an infirm person upon the sabbath day, presently upon that semblance condemned him of violating the Law; not considering either the sense of the Law, or the nature of his performance; and this he termeth unrighteous judgment. Every accusation should be deemed null, until, both as to matter of fact, and in point of right, it be firmly proved true;* it sufficeth not to presume it may be so; to say, it seemeth thus, doth not sound like the voice of a judge; otherwise seeing there never is wanting some colour of accusation, every action being liable to some suspicion, or sinister construction, no innocence could be secure, no person could escape condemnation; the reputation and interest of all men living would continually stand exposed to inevitable danger. It is a rule of equity and humanity built upon plain reason, that rather a nocent person should be permitted to escape, than an innocent should be constrained to suffer: for then impunity of the one is but an inconvenience; the suffering of the other is wrong: the punishment of the guilty yieldeth only a remote probable benefit; the affliction of the blameless involveth a near certain mischief: wherefore it is more prudent and more righteous to absolve a man, of whose guilt there are probable arguments, than to condemn any man upon bare suspicions. And remarkable it is how God in the law did prescribe the manner of trial and judgment, even in the highest case, and most nearly touching himself, that of *idolatry: If* (saith the Law, Deut. xvii. 4), *it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such an abomination is wrought in Israel; then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, and shalt stone them.* See what great caution is prescribed, what pregnant evidence is required in such cases: it is not enough that it be reported, or come to our ear; diligent inquiry must be made, it must be found true, it must appear certain, before we may proceed to condemn, or execute; it is indeed not fair judgment, but mere

* ——— μὴ πρότερον τὰς ψήφους ἐκφέρειν, πρὶν ἂν ἐναργεῖς ἀποδείξεις γένωνται.—Chrys. in Gen. Hom. 42.

* Quod probari non potest, mihi infectum est.—*Bern.*

De occultis cordis alieni temere judicare iniquum est, et cum cujus non videntur opera nisi bona, peccatum est ex suspicione reprehendere. —*Joh.* iii. 1; Ep. 1.

[k] Prov. xviii. 13. [l] Jude 10.

[m] John vii. 24.

calumny, to condemn a man before he doth, by sufficient proof, appear guilty.

If this rule were regarded, how many censures would be prevented! For do not men catch at any shadow of fault? Are they not ready upon the least presumption to condemn their neighbour? Doth not any, even the weakest and vainest testimony, any wandering hearsay, or vulgar rumour, serve to ground the most heavy sentences?

5. From hence is plainly consequent, that there are divers causes wholly exempted from our judgment, and which in no case we must pretend to meddle with; such as are the secret thoughts, affections, and purposes of men, not expressed by plain words, nor declared by overt acts; for a capacity of judging doth ever suppose a power of cognizance; and it being impossible for us to reach the knowledge of those things, we cannot therefore pretend to judge of them. As it is the property of God to search the hearts and try the reins, so it is his prerogative to judge concerning the secret motions in them: the which we attempting to do, no less vainly and foolishly, than presumptuously and profanely do encroach upon.

This point also being regarded, would prevent innumerable rash judgments; for men commonly do no less dive into the thoughts, and reprehend the inward dispositions and designs of their neighbour, than they do his most apparent and avowed actions; it is almost as ordinary to blame men for the invisible workings of their mind, as for their most visible deportment in conversation.

6. Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, either present or final, of our neighbour in regard to God;* so as to take him for a wicked man, or to denounce reprobation upon him: for the state of men is not so much determined by single actions, as by a body of practice, or by a long course and tenor of life, compounded and complicated of actions in number and kind unconceivably various: it dependeth not only upon external visible behaviour, but upon the practice of close retirements, and occult motions of soul; upon the results of natural temper, upon the influence of fortuitous circumstances; upon many things indiscernible, inscrutable, and unaccountable to us; the which God alone can perceive and estimate thoroughly: *God seeth not* (as he did himself tell Samuel) *as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart: he searcheth our hearts, and understandeth our thoughts afar off: he compasseth our path, and is acquainted with all our ways: he weigheth our spirits; he knoweth our frame; he numbereth our steps;*[n] he scanneth our designs, and poiseth all our circumstances exactly; he doth penetrate and consider many things transcending our reach, upon which the true worth of persons and real merit of actions do depend: he therefore only can well judge of men's state. As a specious outside doth often cover inward hollowness and foulness, so under an unpromising appearance much solidity and sincerity of goodness may lodge; a dirty ground doth often contain good seeds within it: our judgment therefore in such cases is likely, at least in degree, to be fallacious and unjust; and therefore it is fit to supersede it, according to the advice and discourse of St. Paul: *He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise* (that is, a right estimate of his person and deeds) *from God.*[o]

If this were duly considered, many hard thoughts and many harsh words would be spared; men would not be so apt to damn those whom they have no skill to try.

Further: a judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing him to appear, or without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend and justify himself. Judgment should not be administered clancularly, in dark corners, but in open court: not suspiciously, in a muttering or whispering way; but frankly, with a clear and audible voice; not upon surprise, but with allowance of leisure and advice, that the party may be able to ap-

* Πολλὰ δεῖ στραφῆναι, καὶ παθεῖν, πρὶν ἄλλου καταγνῶναι δυσσέβειαν.—Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

[n] Psal. cxxxix. 6; 1 Sam. xvi. 7; Isa. xi. 3; Psal. cxxxix. 2, 3; Prov. xvi. 2; 1 Sam. ii. 3; Psal. ciii. 14; Job xiv. 16.

[o] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

prehend his case and manage his plea for his best defence: for it may justly be presumed, that as he is most concerned, so he is best acquainted with his own proceedings, and may allege reasons for them, which no man can so well perceive as himself; it is therefore fit that he should be heard before he is condemned, that he may not suffer wrong; at least that he may be convinced that he doth not, and that our proceeding may be cleared from misprision; that also the world may be satisfied of justice being done; and that likewise false accusers may be liable to due shame and chastisement. The manner of proceeding used by the Romans, and reported by Festus in St. Paul's case, was full of reason and equity: *It is not* (said that governor) *the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he, which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him.*[p] Otherwise indeed any innocence may easily be oppressed irrecoverably, without any defence, and consequently without any means of evasion or redress.* We should never yield both ears to the accuser, but reserve one for the accused.† The end of justice, we may consider, is not to condemn, nor to work mischief to any one, but rather, so far as may be, to acquit and prevent evil to all; at least it aimeth to clear the truth, and state the case indifferently; wherefore it is just, that all advantage that well can be, should be afforded to the obnoxious party for his justification and deliverance; at least that he be not denied equal advantage with his prosecutors; humanity would allow him some favour; the most rigorous justice cannot refuse him leave to contest his cause upon equal terms: wherefore it is fit that he should be acquainted with his case, that competent time and means should be afforded him to prepare for his defence, that his plea should receive, if not a favourable, yet a free audience: the contrary practice is indeed rather backbiting, whispering, supplanting, or sycophantry, than fair and lawful judging.

The observation of this rule would also cut off many censures; for seldom it is that our censurers do charge men to their faces, but rather take all possible care, that what they say may never come to the ears of those whom they accuse; they fear nothing more that being confronted and detected; they decline the shame and the requital due to their sycophantic practice; which is a manifest argument of their foul dealing; and they no less in reality do thence condemn themselves than they would seem to condemn others.

8. Moreover, a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment, so as never to condemn any man for acting that which is enjoined, or approved, or permitted by them; he must not pronounce according to his private fancy, or particular affection, but according to the standing laws: which as they are the only certain rules of moral action, the only grounds of obligation, the only standards of guilt and innocence; so in reason they should be the sole measures of judging: he that proceedeth otherwise is an arbitrary and a slippery judge; he encroacheth upon the right and liberty of those with whom he meddleth, pronouncing them guilty whom God and reason do proclaim blameless. This is that which St. Paul doth reprove in the 14th to the Romans, and otherwhere.[q] The case was this: some were of opinion, that abstaining from some kinds of meat, and observing some festival times, were matters of duty required by God; others thought it free to eat any thing, and to use any times alike: these, according to such their private opinions, did censure the practices of each other: one party condemned the other as transgressing duty, the other contemned them as weak in judgment: but the apostle reproveth both as irregular in their behaviour, in taxing one another for matters which on both hands were indifferent; the divine Law having clearly

* Χρὴ τοὺς ἐννόμως δικάζοντας τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ θατέραν ταῖν ἀκοαῖν ἀκεραίαν φυλάξαι, &c.— Theod. Ep. 91.

† God himself, as some of the Fathers observe, hath shewed us an example of this equity, *Descendam igitur et videbo*, &c.—Gen. xviii. 21. Καίτοι σαφῶς ἤδει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων τὴν πονηρίαν. Ἀλλ' ὅμως ἔφη καταβὰς ὄψομαι, διδάσκων ἡμᾶς ἀναμένειν τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν πεῖραν.—Theod. Ep. 119, P. Pelagius ad Eliam.

[p] Acts xxv. 16.

[q] Rom. xiv; 1 Cor. viii. 8; Col. ii. 16.

neither enjoined those observances, nor prohibited them; so that each man had a liberty to do, or to abstain, as he thought good, or most agreeable to his duty, and conducible to his salvation. So is it culpable in us to blame any man for doing that which is not repugnant to God's express command, or to the plain dictates of reason.

The observing this condition would smother many censures: for do we not commonly reprehend our neighbours for practices wholly blameless, perhaps commendable? Do we not sometimes grievously reproach them for not complying with our desires, for not serving our interests, for not jumping with our humours, for not dancing after our pipe; for dissenting from us in any conceit, although dubious or false; for discosting from our practice, although bad or inconvenient? Say we not ordinarily, he is morose, peevish, singular, rude, because he would not *run with us into the same excess of riot;* he is weak, nice, superstitious, because he constantly and strictly adhered to his duty; he is negligent, loose, profane, because he useth his liberty in some matters indifferent? Bar such matters of obloquy, into how narrow a compass would it be restrained!

9. Hence further it is to be supposed, that a judge should be a person of good knowledge and ability; well versed and skilful in the laws concerning matters under debate; endued with good measure of reason, enabling him as to sift and canvass matters of fact, so to compare them accurately with the rules of right: for nothing is more absurd than an ignorant and unskilful judge.* Men, therefore, of weak capacity, of mean education, of small experience, or qualified to judge in few cases, most things being placed above their reach; such never should presume to censure actions, the worth or moral quality whereof depend upon the stating and resolution of abstruce, intricate, or subtle questions. It is not, therefore, for mechanics or rustics to judge about difficulties of science, about controversies in religion, about mysteries of policy, or reasons of state; or to censure those who deal in them: in so doing, they hugely trespass beyond their calling and sphere; they do strangely misbecome the bench, and will very untowardly misbehave themselves thereon; the decision of such matters is to be reserved to those, who by study and experience have attained peculiar faculties to do it respectively.

Observing this point, would draw many down from the usurped seats of judicature, and stop numberless vain sentences; we should have very few judges left, if all men would be so modest and so wise as not to meddle beyond their skill and ability.

10. Again: it is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser; not to seek for misdemeanours; not to draw more causes under his cognizance than are in course presented before him; he should rather judge as out of constraint, than of choice; rather as sorry to find a necessity, than glad to snatch an occasion of condemning offenders.* So should we rather decline than seek the office of censuring our brethren, rather conniving at and concealing their faults, than being forward to expose them; absolute reason only should induce, or indispensable necessity force us thereto.

This also greatly would diminish the trade of censuring; for if we should never censure without great reason or necessity, how seldom should we do it! Do we not rather affect to do it causelessly and needlessly? Do we not eagerly search after and greedily embrace all occasions to do it? Is it not a pleasant entertainment to us, to be carping and cavilling at any body we meet, at any thing we see done? Further,

11. He that pretendeth to judge others should himself be innocent; under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation.† Is it not very improper for a criminal, for one who is not only in truth and in his own conscience guilty, but who standeth actually convicted of heinous offences, to sit upon the bench, determining about the deeds and the states of others? It is the case of us all: we are all notoriously guilty of heinous crimes be-

* Ἕκαστος κρίνει καλῶς ἃ γινώσκει, καὶ τούτων ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸς κριτής.—Arist. Eth. lib. iii.

* Sine dubio in omnibus statim accusationibus hoc agendum est, ne ad eas libenter descendisse videamur.—*Quint.* xi. 1.

† Cum ipse sis reus, in alterum audes ferre sententiam?—*Opt.* 2.

fore God; we all do lie under the sentence of his law;[r] we do all stand in need of pardon from our Judge, his mercy is our only hope and refuge: and shall we then pretend to be judges, or be passing sentence on our brethren? If only those who are free and guiltless should judge, who could undertake it? There would surely be no more than there appeared then, when in the case of the woman taken in adultery, our Lord propounded the like condition: Ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, *he that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her*:[s] upon which proposition the sequel was, *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst*: so, infallibly, should no man be allowed to judge who were not himself void of like guilt, would every man escape censure.

12. Lastly: it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candour, and mildness; as a general friend, a friend to justice, to the public, to mankind, to the party impeached. As a friend to justice, he should be careful that the defendant receive no wrong in him, credit or interest; as a lover of the public, he should wish that no offences or scandals be found; out of humanity, he should desire that no man may incur the blemish of guilt, or pain of suffering; he should tender the party's case as compassionable, and desire that he may be delivered from the evil threatening him: this should render him willing to acquit and free the party, apt to apprehend and interpret all things favourably, ready to excuse and mollify the business what he can; far from picking faults out of obscure surmises or slender pretences, from aggravating the miscarriages that are detected, from stretching the blame further than it will reach of itself, or making the case worse than it needs must be, from pronouncing a harsh or heavy sentence thereon. He should always be of counsel to the defendant, pleading his cause so far as truth and equity will permit; putting himself in his case, and thence nowise dealing with him more rigorously than he, according to impartial judgment, should in the like case deem it equal that himself should be dealt with: in fine, however, the matter in the result may appear to stand, he should avoid rigour and extremity, he should exercise clemency and mercy.

If this course were obsersed, innumerable causes, which now are severely judged, would never be mentioned, or come under trial, but would presently be cast out; many would soon, after small discussion, be voided; few would pass that extremity of censure, which now, by the cruel asperity of men, they are forced to undergo: for we do not accuse men for things that are no faults? Do we no exaggerate the guilt of petty faults? Do we not insult over great miscarriages with too unmerciful severity, as if they were incorrigible and unpardonable?

Seeing, then, few of us, according to those reasonable qualifications and conditions, are capable of being judges; seeing, if those equal rules were observed, most censures would be discarded; seeing how hard it is for any man, either warrantably to undertake, or uprightly to discharge this office; great reason there is for this precept, most fit it is that we should be forbidden to judge.

So much for the part explicative and directive; now for the persuasive: and for inducing us to eschew this practice, let us briefly declare the pravity and vanity of it; the performing which will, I suppose, be sufficient to dissuade and deter us from it. Be pleased only first to note, that some considerations which we shall propound will be applicable to some kind of bad censure, some to another, according to the several defects and incapacities we have to judge lawfully, upon the grounds already touched.

1. Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God.

By taking upon ourselves to judge unduly, without authority, or beyond it, we do invade God's office, setting up ourselves as judges in his room; we usurp his right, exercising jurisdiction over his subjects, without order and licence from him: it is St. Paul's argument, *Who art thou that judgest another's servant?*[t] that

[r] Psal. cxliii. 2 [s] John viii. 7, 9. [t] Rom. xiv. 4.

is, how intolerably bold and arrogant, how sacrilegiously injurious and profane art thou, to climb up into God's tribunal, and thence to pronounce doom upon his subjects?

By rash judgment in matters not subject to our cognizance (as when we pronounce concerning the secret thoughts and intentions of men), we proudly and perversely do arrogate to ourselves the incommunicable perfections of God, who alone can know such things, and determine rightly in such cases; who therefore hath reserved them to himself, commanding us *to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.*[u]

By passing sentence about the state of our neighbour, we do anticipate God's judgment, and by pre-judging strive to frustrate it. We take upon us to *purge his floor*, to sever the chaff from the corn, and the tares from the wheat, to discriminate the goats from the sheep;* which to perform will be the work of God's infinite wisdom and justice at *the great day.*

By censuring our brethren causelessly, for not complying with our conceits, humours, or practices, we lay hold upon and appropriate to ourselves God's legislative power; we subject his law to our fancy and pleasure; we, in effect, condemn his law of error and imperfection; we do at least make ourselves sharers with him in the enacting laws, and dispensing justice. *He* (saith St. James) *that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law;*[v] that is, he opprobriously doth imply the law to be defective, until he doth complete or correct it; making it a guilt not to satisfy his will or conceit, besides the plain intent of the law: the dispensation of justice is not sufficient, unless he partake therein, taxing whom and why he pleaseth; God, without him is not a perfect lawgiver or judge.

We are also very ingrateful in not being favorable towards our brethren in judgment; when as God is in his judgment so benign, patient, and merciful toward us, who *is* not *extreme to mark what we do amiss;* is not forward to seek or find faults, but rather *waiteth to be gracious*, hideth *his face from our sins*, and *passeth by our transgressions;* doth not aggravate our offences, but rather doth excuse them, *remembering that we are flesh;* is not glad of occasion to punish, but *delighteth in mercy*, and *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men;*[w] is not severe, but *punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve*, and *in his wrath remembereth mercy.*[x] And are we not impious if we do so ill requite him, and so little resemble him, in being rigorous and harsh toward our brethren, when they offend, or seem to do so?

In fine, censuring is impious, as involving the violation of those great commandments, of exercising, in all our demeanour and dealing, humility, meekness, piety, and mercy, toward our brethren; of pursuing and promoting peace among them.

2. Censuring, in respect to our neighbour, is an unjust practice. It is unjust to meddle in affairs with which we have nothing to do; to draw those persons under our jurisdiction who are not subject to it, but are liable to render their account at another bar; to punish those who in their reputation or interest, over whom we have no just authority, *who have their own master, to whom they must stand or fall.*

It is most unjust to judge any man without competent means of knowing, or skill to determine his case; to condemn him without diligent trial, without certain proof, without full conviction of his fault; to punish him without just cause, or beyond due measure.

It is very unjust to usurp an interest in the goods which are to our neighbour most proper and dear, his credit and concernments depend thereon, disposing of them as we please, to his disadvantage and prejudice.

It is also very unjust, when as we do need the candid judgment, the forbearance and pardon of others, for many

* Matt. iii. 12, 13; xxv. 32. Quantus arrogantiæ tumor est, quanta humilitatis ac lenitatis oblivio, arrogantiæ suæ quanta jactatio, ut quis aut audeat aut facere se posse credat, quod nec apostolis concessit Dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet se posse discernere, aut quasi ipsi paleam auferre, et aream purgare concessum sit, paleas conetur a tritico separare?—*Cypr.* Ep. 52.

[u] 1 Cor. iv. 5. [v] James iv. 11.

[w] Psal. cxxx. 3; Isa. xxx. 18; Psal. li. 9; Mic. vii. 18; Psal. lxxviii. 39; ciii. 14; Lam iii. 33.

[x] Ezra ix. 13; Hab. iii. 2.

things faulty and offensive that we commit, to refuse the like to others.*

3. Censuring is also a very uncharitable practice, and so, contrary to the principal duty of our religion: it is so eminently in all cases wherein it is unjust; for charity doth virtually contain justice, and transcendeth it; it is so peculiarly whenever it is harsh or rigorous, when it is affected, when it is needless or unprofitable; for charity disposeth us to be gentle, meek, patient, and merciful in all our dealings; it engages us to hide and smother, to diminish and excuse, to pass by and pardon offences: *Charity seeketh no evil*, it *covereth all things*, it *beareth all things*;[y] it tendereth our neighbour's good and advantage of all kinds (his credit, his interest, his convenience, and pleasure;) it therefore will inflict no more evil than reason and necessity shall indispensably require.†

A censurer is indeed unjust and uncharitable, not only toward those whom he censureth, but also toward those into whom thereby he doth infuse ill opinion, and ill will toward their neighbour; he is guilty of their injustice and uncharitableness, a mischief more irreparable than his own.

4. Censuring is a very foolish and vain practice in manifold respects; as arguing great ignorance and inconsiderateness, as producing grievous inconveniences and mischiefs, especially to the practiser of it.‡

It signifieth that we do not well understand or not well consider the natural impotency and frailty of mankind; how liable others are to mistake and slip, and how prone we ourselves are thereto; how as St. James saith, *in many things we offend all*;[z] did we observe, or would weigh this, we should not be so forward to censure, or vehement and bitter in it; we should see failing and tripping in many things to be a common case, rather demanding commiseration than censure.

It implieth also, that we little consider how our escaping any faults, which our neighbour slippeth into, is nowise imputable to any worth or virtue in us, so much as the good providence and merciful grace of God, guarding or rescuing us from them: if we did apprehend and reflect on this, it would appear our duty rather to bless God for our being protected from miscarriages, than censoriously to insult over those who seem to fall into them. It signifieth we have no sight or sense of our own defects; for did we clearly see, did we humbly resent them, that would damp our heat and earnestness to censure. It declares a fond self-conceit, that we deem ourselves superior to our neighbour in wisdom, and less obnoxious to blame, and therefore fit to be his judges; whereas, according to a sober esteem of ourselves, we should appear more fit to stand at the bar than to sit upon the bench; and should thence more dread the one than affect the other.

It showeth likewise, that we do not rightly conceive the nature, or worthily esteem the consequences of this practice: we know not, or regard not, the value of our neighbour's reputation, which by censure we do mean to ruin or impair: we perhaps by no means would rob him of his substance, or of his life; yet we scruple not by grievous censure to bereave him of his good name; which he, the best prizer of his own goods, may esteem beyond his estate or his life itself: we think it nothing, or a slight matter to carp at him; but he feeleth it very painful, and deeply resenteth it.

It argueth in us an untamed fierceness of mind and discomposedness of passion, which can never consist or cohabit with wisdom; for a well-ordered, calm, and free mind, will be slow in conceiving offence or dislike, moderate in estimating things, reserved in expressing its sentiments, not easily transported into extremity or excess; it consequently hardly will suffer a man to break forth into rash or harsh censure.[a] So many signs and arguments of incogitancy and blindness this practice doth involve.

5. Furthermore, this practice will pro-

* ——————— æquum est
Peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus.
Hor. Serm. i. 3.
Det ille veniam facile, cui venia est opus.—*Sen. Tr.*

† Οὕτως ἔχω ἐν τοῖς ἀμφιβόλοις, νεύειν χρῆναι πρὸς τὸ φιλάνθρωπον, καὶ ἀπογινώσκειν μᾶλλον, ἢ καταγινώσκειν τῶν ὑπαιτίων. Naz. Or. 21.

‡ Est proprium stultitiæ aliorum vitia cernere, oblivisci suorum.—*Cic. Tusc.* i.

[y] 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7. [z] James iii. 2.

[a] Prov. xii. 16,—A fool's wrath is presently known; but a prudent man covereth shame. Prov. xxix. 11,—A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it till afterwards.

duce many great inconveniences and mischiefs to us.

1. We do thereby provoke, and in a sort authorize others to requite us in the same kind:* for nothing more doth excite the indignation, doth inflame the anger, doth engender the hatred of men toward us, than being pragmatical in finding fault, and hasty to censure their doings causelessly or immoderately; nothing seeming to them a more certain argument that we bear them ill-will, or do contemn them; and if we so vex them, they will in requital be as ready, by finding or making faults in us, to vex and trouble us; it engageth their care, and quickeneth their industry, and whetteth their invention to observe or devise matter of recrimination. Men think it not only lawful, but even needful for them, in their own defence, to disparage the censurer, that his judgment may have the less weight to their prejudice: so that it will infallibly come upon us, as our Lord warneth, using it as an argument to dissuade us from this practice, that, *with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.*[b] Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure.

2. We do by this practice not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly, and according to ready consequence, do pass it upon ourselves, seeing we seldom in kind or equivalently, are ourselves clear of that which we charge upon others;[c] with our own weapon of sharp censure, we through another's side do imprudently wound ourselves; and often, as David did in his parley with Nathan, adjudge ourselves to capital punishment; so that to any censorious person it may be said, in St. Paul's words, *Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*[e]

3. We do, by censuring others aggravate our own faults, and deprive them of excuse, and render ourselves uncapable of mercy and pardon: for of all men, he that is forward and prone to censure, who is rigorous and severe in judging others, deserveth no favour, nor can reasonably pretend thereto.* *Inexcusable* (saith St. Paul) *art thou, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest;* for, *thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*† and, Μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων. *Do not* (saith St. James) *moanfully complain one against another, lest you be condemned;* and, *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy,*[g] in his judgment, saith the same Apostle.‡ Which passages imply, that to be unmerciful in this kind, will expose us to the severity of judgment in regard to our offences; or, that if we deal harshly with our brethren now, God will then proceed the more severely toward us, when our great cause doth come under trial.

4. Indeed, censuring others is an argument that we do little mind our own case, or consider to what a dreadful judgment we do stand obnoxious: did we think of that, we should see cause rather to employ our leisure and care in stating our own accounts, than in examining those of others; more advisable it would appear to mind our own case, than to busy ourselves in canvassing and determining the state of our neighbour, finding what great need our actions will have in that day of favourable construction and merciful allowance, we should become candid and mild in reflecting upon the actions of others; we should not be forward to carp at anything, we should scarce have the heart to condemn any

* ——— at tibi contra
Evenit, inquirant vitia ut tua rursus et illi.
Hor. Serm. i. 3.

[b] Matt. vii. 2; Luke vi. 37, 38.
[c] Vid. Chrys. in Matt. Or. 36. p. 249.
[d] 2 Sam. xii. [e] Rom. ii. 1.

* Ὁ πικρὸς τὰ ἀλλότρια ἐξετάζων ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἑαυτὸν πλημμελήμασιν οὐδεμιᾶς ἀπολαύσεται συγγνώμης ποτέ. Chrys. Ἀνέρ γ'.

† —— ἀνθρώπων οἱ, πλείστοι βραδεῖς μέν εἰσιν τῶν ἰδίων κριταί, ταχεῖς δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐξετασταί. Naz. Or. 26.

Οὕτω τῶν μὲν ἑτέροις ἁμαρτανομένων πικροὶ καθήμεθα δικασταί, τὰς δὲ ἑαυτῶν δοκοὺς παρορῶμεν. Chrys. ad Demet. tom. vi. Or. 52.

‡ Οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πεπλημμεληκότων ἡμῖν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς σῆς περὶ ἑτέρων οἵαν τὴν ψῆφον ὁ Θεός. Chrys. ibid.

Ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ φιλάνθρωπος, καὶ ἥμερος, καὶ συγγνωμονικὸς ὑποτίμηται τὸν πλείονα τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ὄγκον, οὕτως ὁ πικρὸς, καὶ ὠμὸς, καὶ ἀπαραίτητος πολὺ τοῖς οἰκείοις ἁμαρτήμασι προστίθησι μέγεθος. Ibid.

[f] Rom. ii. 1, 3. [g] James v. 9; ii. 13.

man; this St. Paul seemeth to imply, when he thus argueth: *Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ:*[g] that is, why do any of us judge others, seeing we must all be judged ourselves? It is not seemly, it is not expedient, for those who soon must be arraigned, and put to answer for themselves, to be busy in questioning and prejudging others; but rather to spend their care and pains in preparing for their own account.*

5. Nothing indeed more causeth us to neglect our own case, nothing more engageth us to leave our own faults unobserved and uncorrected, than this humour.† It is easy to observe, that as they who are most sparing and gentle in censure are usually most exempt from blame (for that carefully reflecting upon their own infirmities and defects, spending their heat and activity of spirit upon amending their own errors and faults, they have less time, less concernment, less mind, to search out and scan the imperfections and misdemeanours of others; they do find less reason also, and therefore have less will to be fierce or severe toward them), so the most censorious are usually the most stupid in discerning, and most careless in retrenching, their own faults.‡ And needs it must be so; for the actions of other men devour their leisure, take up the intention of their spirits, employ the keenness of their passions upon them, so that they cannot and will not attend to themselves; they are so much abroad, they are so very busy otherwhere, that they little know or care what is done at home; while they are *spying* and pulling out *motes from their brother's eye*, they *consider not the beam that is in their own eye*,[h] although never so gross and obvious.§

6. Hence, I say, it is, that commonly the best men are the most candid and gentle, and they are most apt to blame others who deserve worse themselves; that the sharpest tongues and foulest lives do usually go together; that they who are the strictest judges of their own, are the fairest interpreters of other men's actions; and they who will least pardon others, do most excuse themselves; that they who are strangely acute in descrbing other men's faults are stark blind in discerning their own. Our Saviour, therefore, chargeth such persons with hypocrisy: *Thou hypocrite; first cast the beam out of thine own eye;* implying, that they do but falsely pretend a respect for goodness and zeal against sin, seeing in their own practice they indulge it; that it is indeed rather pride, peevishness, idleness, spleen, or selfish design, that actuateth them.

7. In fine, the censorious humour, as it argueth ill-nature to be predominant (a vulturous nature, which easily smelleth out, and hastily flieth toward, and greedily feedeth on carrion), as it signifieth bad conscience; for he that knoweth evil of himself is most prone to suspect, and most quick to pronounce ill concerning others, so it breedeth and fostereth such ill dispositions; it debaucheth the minds of men, rendering them dim and doltish in apprehending their own faults, negligent and heedless in regard to their own hearts and ways; apt to please and comfort themselves in the evils, real or imaginary, of their neighbours; which to do is a very barbarous and brutish practice.

These considerations may, I hope, suffice to persuade the observance of this precept, by the help of God's grace, to which I commend you, and conclude.

Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Chsist, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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* Τὰ ἡμέτερα ἐξετάζωμεν καὶ οὐδένα ἐροῦμεν κακῶς. —Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or. 2.

† Οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπον κατηγοροῦντα καὶ τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους πολυπραγμονοῦντα βίους τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιμεληθῆναί ποτε ζωῆς. Τῆς γὰρ σπουδῆς ἁπάσης αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν ἑτρέων πολυπραγμοσύνην ἀναλισκομένης, ἀνάγκη τὰ αὐτοῦ πάντα ἁπλῶς κεῖσθαι καὶ ἠμελημένως.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. γ'.

‡ Vid. Chrys. tom. ii. Or. 42. Sen. de Vit. B. 27. Βραδὺ εἰς ὑπόνοιαν κακοῦ τὸ πρὸς κακίαν δυσκίνητον.—Naz. Orat. 8.

§ Τὸ κακίας ἐλεύθερον, καὶ ὑφορᾶσθαι κακίαν ἀλλότερον.—Naz. Ep. 27.

'Ο μὲν γὰρ κακὸς τάχιστα ἂν καταγνοίη καὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὁ ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦ κακοῦ ῥαδίως. Naz. Orat. 21.

Ego mi ignosco, Mænius inquit,
Stultus et improbus hic amor est, dignusque notari.
Hor. Serm. 1. 3.

[g] Rom. xiv. 10. [h] Matt. vii. 3, 4.

SERMON XXI.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.—*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.*[a]

As frequently between neighbouring states there do rise dissensions and contests about the just limits of their territories; so doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miscarriage in practice; for although the extreme degrees, and even the middle regions of these things are very distant; yet the borders of them do lie very close together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of separation running between them, which commonly, being very narrow, thin, and obscure, it is not easy to discern. So it particularly falleth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almost indiscernibly differ one from the other; for there are about this case precepts which seem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

St. Paul here biddeth us to be studious or ambitious of quiet; otherwhere he enjoineth us to be earnestly active (to be *σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροὶ, not slothful in business*:)[b] here he would have us to mind our own affairs; otherwhere he prescribeth, that we should *not look every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others.*[c]

According to the general drift of scripture, and the tenor of our religion, we are in charity obliged to concern ourselves heartily for the good of our neighbour, and to strive earnestly in promoting it: we are enjoined so far to interpose and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to instruct and advise them, to admonish and excite them, to check and reprove them upon occasion; to offer and yield them succour, to compose differences between them; to promote their edification and peace: *Let us* (saith the Apostle to the Hebrews) *consider one another,*[d] *to provoke unto love and to good works. Let us* (saith St. Paul to the Romans) *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another;* and, *Exhort yourselves together, and edify one another;—warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak,*[e] saith he to the Thessalonians in this Epistle.

To be zealous and earnest in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to instruct them; that we enter into contest with them; that we examine their words and actions; that we presume to tax and oppose them.[f]

In fine; our religion doth seem, by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, so to unite us together, so to endear us to one another and to all men, that all things belonging to our brethren do nearly touch us, and should answerably affect us; so that by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be said to meddle with what doth not concern us.

The condition of things also may seem to require, that we so intermeddle; for the duties and affairs of men are so entangled or interwoven, that we can hardly prosecute any concernments of our own, without being engaged in the matters of others: in discharging all offices of society, in pursuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourse and conversation, while we transact our own business, we cannot avoid the furthering or obstructing the business of others, who are engaged in the same or contrary designs. Society doth subsist by combinations of care and pain, regarding common interests, so that it seemeth impossible so to mind our own business, as not to meddle with the business of others.

Yet notwithstanding, St. Paul enjoineth us so to affect quiet, as simply to mind our own business, or not to be meddlesome in the concernments of others; for that *doing our own business* is meant exclusively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of τὰ ἴδια, which is emphatical, and sig-

[a] Καταναλίσκειν ἀλλήλους.
[b] Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or. 19.
[c] Rom. xii. 11. [d] Phil. ii. 4. [e] Heb. x. 24; Rom. xiv. 19; xv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 11, 14. [f] Tit. i. 11.

nifieth only our own, or our proper business; and because it is joined with *being quiet*, which respecteth others, and importeth not stirring beyond our own bounds; to be so meddlesome, being also a practice expressly condemned by St. Peter, in that prohibition, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a malefactor, or as a busybody in other men's matters:*[f] where pragmaticalness is, we see, not only forbidden, but is coupled with the most heinous offences.

How then shall we reconcile these things? How shall we in the case sever between the bounds of duty and blame? It is indeed somewhat difficult to do it precisely, and with distinctions which shall reach all cases. But somewhat I shall endeavour toward it, by propounding some rules and directions, which should commonly be observed in our dealing and intercourse with others: but first let us a little reflect upon the terms in which the precept is couched.

Study to be quiet. Study; the word is φιλοτιμεῖσθαι, which signifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of desire and care, as men are wont to pursue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expression containeth a remarkable emphasis, or a grave acumen; for whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be restlessly busy, and engageth them in the concernments proper to others, St. Paul biddeth them to be ambitous the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abstinence from other affairs beside their own.

To be quiet: This doth signify, not a physical, but a moral rest; not a total forbearance of action; not a fastidious or drowsy listlessness to do anything; not a senseless indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an absolute sequestering ourselves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the τὸ ἡσυχάζειν here, but a naughty sloth, stupidity, or savageness: the quiet here meant is opposed to disorderly motion, to turbulency, to contention, to pragmatical curiosity, to all such exorbitant behaviour, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace disturbed, their just interest or welfare anywise prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, steady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and measures prescribed by reason, justice and charity, modesty and sobriety: such a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which so move that they seem ever to stand still, and never disturb one another: in fine, what a quiet is meant, the subsequent words and the context do show: it followeth,—

And πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *to do our business*, or to act things proper and pertinent to us; things which suit to our condition, our station, our vocation; whereby we may discharge our own duties, and supply our own needs; may work benefit to others, or however avoid being anywise burdensome or troublesome to them; an instance of which practice is immediately subjoined; *to work with our own hands—that we may have lack of nothing;*[g] in another place St. Paul calleth it μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι, *to work with quiet*, opposing it to περιεργάζεσθαι, being overbusy, or pragmatically curious: and to walking disorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our calling, or the rules of our duty; so as to encroach upon the rights, or molest the quiet of others.

The words, then, as they do imply an obligation lying upon us to be industrious in our own business, so they chiefly design to prohibit our meddling with the concernments of others; but how to settle the limits between this quiet minding our own business, and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others; how to distinguish between meddling innocently, from being blameably meddlesome, *hic labour, hoc opus est;* this is that hard task which I am to undertake, but cannot hope thoroughly to perform. However, the method toward it, which I shall observe, is this:—First, I shall touch some cases, in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others: then I shall propound some general rules, according to which such meddlesomeness is commonly blameable: in the next place, I shall assign some directions proper to some chief and most obvious kinds of meddling: and lastly, offer some considerations to dissuade men from this pragmatical humour.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the business of their inferiors (that is, of

[f] 1 Pet. iv. 15.

[g] 2 Thess. iii. 12.

such as are subject to their care and charge) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magistrates may inspect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and punish the offences of their subjects: parents may advise, rebuke, and correct their children: spiritual guides and pastors may admonish and reprove their flock. These things, while with due prudence, equity, and moderation, they perform, they do indeed *πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια do their own business;* it is their proper work, to which God hath designed them, and which reason exacteth of them; they are appointed, to use St. Paul's expression, *to attend continually upon this very thing;*[h] their proceedings, therefore, are not to be charged with culpable pragmaticalness.

2. In any case, wherein the honour and interest of God is much concerned, we may interpose in vindication and maintenance of them. If any man dareth to blaspheme God's name, we may and ought to stand up in its defence; if any man disparageth religion, we should strive to clear its repute; if any man impugneth any divine truth of moment, we should endeavour to assert it; if any man notoriously transgresseth God's law, we may discountenance his presumption, and reprove him for it: every man in such cases, as God's subject, hath not only a commission, but an obligation; is indeed by his allegiance bound to serve God, in maintaining the honour and interest of his empire: it is foul disloyalty, it is pitiful baseness, to forbear meddling in such cases.* Thus have good men, without fear or shame, defended religion and truth against the mightiest powers and most dangerous oppositions that could be: thus *stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment,*[i] not only checking, but avenging that heinous scandal: thus Elias maintained the true worship of God against all the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of Israel: thus the prophets did not forbear to tax the wicked manners of the princes, the priests, and the people in their times: thus St. John Baptist did not stick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice: so our Saviour censured the superstitious and hypocritical scribes, and he chastised the profaners of God's house: so, in fine, the holy apostles resolutely did assert God's truth against all the world.

3. When the public weal and safety are manifestly concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or secure them: so may we rebuke him that slandereth or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace; we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a soldier against traitors and enemies of his country;[j] every man is born with a commission to defend the public against those which plot its ruin or harm; every man is a party for his prince against rebels, for the church against schismatics, for the law against lawless transgressors, for common peace against those who outrageously disturb it: duty to our superiors, justice and charity to mankind, just regard to our own welfare, allow and oblige us to such meddling.

4. We may also meddle for the succour of right against palpable wrong and outrage: we may help an honest man against a thief assaulting him; we may guard the life of any man against an assassin; we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent person aspersed by a slanderous tongue; as Moses,—*seeing one of his brethren suffer wrong, defended him; and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian;*[k] as the penitent thief rebuked his companion, unjustly railing upon our Saviour:[l] the common interest of justice and charity do not only excuse, but commend meddling in such cases.

5. We may likewise meddle with the proceedings of others, when our own just defence requireth it: we may repel those who attack our safety or peace, who invade or rifle our goods, who traduce our good name; we may endeavour to defeat their plots, and to restrain their violence.* This is indeed doing our own business; for to preserve our life with its conve-

* Κοινόν ἐστι τὸ ἔγκλημα, δημόσιον τὸ ἀδίκημα· ἔξεστιν ἑκάστῳ τῶν βουλομένων κατηγορεῖν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ά.

Κἂν ἀκούσῃς τινὸς ἐν ἀμφόδῳ, ἢ ἐν ἀγορᾷ μέσῃ βλασφημοῦντος τὸν θεὸν, πρόσελθε, ἐπιτίμησον· κἂν πληγὰς ἐπιθεῖναι δέῃ, μὴ παραιτήσῃ; ῥάπισον αὐτοῦ τὴν δψιν, σύντριψον αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα, ἁγίασον σοῦ τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς πληγῆς, &c.—Chrys. ibid.

[h] Rom. xiii. 6. [i] Psal. cvi. 30.

* Cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ.

[j] Tertull. [k] Acts vii. 24.

[l] Luke xxiii. 40.

niences and comforts, to maintain our right and just interest, to keep our honour and reputation clear from scandal, is incumbent upon us; we are naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of those considerable goods assigned or intrusted to us by Providence.

6. When the life or welfare, either spiritual or temporal, of our neighbour, is deeply concerned, and cannot otherwise than by our aid be supported or relieved, we may lawfully interpose to yield it: if we see him exposing his life to any great hazzard, or engaging his soul into any great sin, we may in any fair way (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmless force), without any invitation or license, with or against his will, presume to reclaim or restrain him. We may stop him in his career to ruin or grievous mischief; we may withhold him from running into a snare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poison; we may, as St. Jude speaketh, *snatch him out of the fire.*[m] In such case we may reasonably suppose, that our neighbour, being himself, will allow us to meddle, or will not be displeased therewith; if he hath not his wits about him, we may supply him with ours in such exigence: his present consent and approbation are not then requisite, he not being in condition to yield them;* he needeth guardians, and opportunity constituteth us in that office: extreme and evident need will not only excuse the liberty we shall assume, but it obligeth us to use our power to save him;† in case of neglect, that surly answer, *Am I my brother's keeper?*[n] will not serve our turn.‡ We may, we should, it is not only innocent, but just and laudable, for us to be watchful over our neighbour's concernment and deportment, if we do it out of pure charity, in a discreet, quiet, and gentle manner.

7. In fine, if any signal opportunity of doing our neighbour considerable good, especially to his soul, doth offer itself, we may lawfully, we should in charity, embrace it: we may then even obtrude upon him our direction and succour: if he be so blind as not to discern our good will, so peevish as to dislike our proceeding, so ingrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will justify us before God, and at the bar of reason; and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily been accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind.

In these and the like cases, we may, without offending, intermeddle: in doing so we may indeed truly be said to be quiet, and to do our own buisness; because there is no exorbitancy or disorder in such proceeding, because God's law and sound reason have appropriated these things to us, and made them our concernment. There is no business more proper or pertinent to us, than that wherein we labour to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men; this is the principal design of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot misbecome us: but we must however in such cases take heed that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair; we must not take or use such liberty maliciously; we must never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honour, of public good, of justice, truth, or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent: this is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence, the wickedness of fraud and malice.

1. We should never, out of ambition, covetous desire, or self-conceit, so meddle as to invade any man's office, or to assume the exercise of it. A private man should not presume to act the prince or the statesman, offering to control those who are not under him, to deliberate, debate, determine, or pass censure about political affairs or occurrences. A layman should not intrude himself to administer the sacred functions of authoritative teaching, of dispensing the sacraments, of exercising spiritual censures, of defining theological controversies, which are committed to the guides and pastors of the church. No man should set himself upon the tribunal to judge, or undertake, without license or invitation, to arbitrate

* Invito non tribuitur quodcunque pro eo præstatur.—*Reg. J.*

† Furiosis nulla voluntas est.—*R. J.*

‡ Μὴ μοι λέγε τὸ ψυχρὸν τοῦτο ῥῆμα· Τί δέ μοι μέλει; οὐδὲν ἔχω κοινὸν πρὸς αὐτόν, &c.—Vid. Chrys. Ἀνόρ. 1. tom. ii. Or. 59, in Matt. Orat. 77. 78, in Joh. Or. 15, in Eph. Or. 19; Chrys. in Tit. Or. 5, in Heb. Or. 30.

[m] Jude 23. ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες.

[n] Gen. iv. 9.

the causes of others: doing thus is to encroach upon God, and to usurp upon man: we encroach upon God, assuming to ourselves powers not derived from his order, and deserting the station assigned us by his providence; we usurp upon man, exercising authority over him, which he is not bound to stoop unto.

2. We should not, without call or allowance, meddle with out superiors, so as to advise them, to reprehend them, to blame or inveigh against their proceedings; for this is to confound the right order of things, to trespass beyond the bounds of our calling and station, to do wrong, not only to them, but to the public, which is concerned in the upholding their power and respect: it is indeed a worse fault than assuming the ensigns of their dignity, or counterfeiting their stamps; for that is but to borrow the semblance, this is to enjoy the substance, of their authority.

Nothing in this busy and licentious age is more usual, than for private men to invade the office, to exercise the duties, to canvass and control the actions of their superiors; discussing what they ought to do, and prescribing laws to them; taxing what is done by them; murmuring at their decrees, and inveighing against their proceedings: every one is finding holes in the state, and picking quarrels with the conduct of political affairs; every one is reforming and settling the public according to models framed in his own conceit. Things, saith one, are out of order; the constitution is very defective, and ought to be corrected; such a law in all reason should be repealed, and such an one enacted; here our statesmen were out of their politics, and there our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence. No, clamours another no less eagerly, all things stand as well as can be; nothing can be amended, or ought to be altered; our establishment in all respects is more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the state of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himself counsellor of state, and turns legislator, without any call from the king, or choice of the country: every one snatcheth at the sceptre, and invests himself with the senator's robe: every one acteth a prince and a bishop, or indeed is rather a censor and controller of both orders; not considering the wrong he committeth, nor the arrogance he practiseth, nor the mischiefs which naturally ensue upon such demeanour: for to direct or to check governors is in effect to exauctorate or depose them, substituting ourselves in their room: and what greater injury can we do them or the public? To fix or reverse laws belongeth to the highest authority and deepest wisdom, which it is enormous presumption for us to arrogate to ourselves: by attempting such things we confound the ranks of men, and course of things; we ruffle the world, we supplant public tranquillity: and what greater mischief than this can we do among men?

It is the business and duty of those whom God hath constituted his representatives and ministers, to deliberate and conclude what is to be done; and for the due performance of their charge they are accountable to their master, not to us; *Nobis obsequii gloria relicta est;** our duty and our privilege (for so it is, if we could understand it, it being far more easy and safe) it is to submit and obey with quiet and patience; if we do more, we are therein irregular, and no less undutiful to God than to our superiors; we forget those divine rules and precepts: *Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, What doest thou? Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.*[o] We consider not what judgments are denounced upon those whose character it is *to despise government, to be presumptuous and self-willed, not to be afraid to speak evil of dignities.*[p]

We do not weigh the nature of the things we meddle with, nor the advantages of the persons whom we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about them. There is a kind of sacredness in the mysteries of state: as the mysteries of faith do surpass natural reason, so do those of state transcend vulgar capacity; as priests by special grace are qualified best to understand the one, so are princes by like peculiar assistance enabled to

* Tibi summum rerum judicium dii dedere; nobis obsequii gloria relicta est.—*M. Terent. apud Tac. Ann. V. C.*

[o] Eccles. viii. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 13, 18; Phil. ii. 14.

[p] 2 Pet. ii. 10.

penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the world, and maketh them instruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the discharge of their duty; whence their judgments of things are somewhat more than human, and their words may with us pass for oracular: *A divine sentence* (the wise king saith) *is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.*[q] According to the ordinary reason of things, they are best able to judge of such things, being, by reason of their eminent station, able to discern more and further than others; having by experience and constant practice acquired a truer insight into things, and a better skill to manage them: whereas we being placed beneath in a valley, can have no good prospect upon the grounds and causes of their resolutions and proceedings: we, for want of sufficient use and exercise, cannot skill to balance the contrary weights and reasons of things; to surmount the difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and intrigues, which occur in affairs of that kind; we cannot expect those special influences of light and strength from heaven toward judging of affairs, which do not properly concern us: wherefore we are altogether incompetent judges, and impertinent dealers about those things; it is great odds, that in doing so we shall mistake and misbehave ourselves; we consequently do vainly and naughtily to meddle with them. If the love of public good doth transport us, let us restrain ourselves.

3. We should not indeed so much as meddle with the affairs of our equals (those I mean not who do equal us in dignity or worth, but all such who are not subject to our command or charge, however otherwise inferior to us: those, I say, we should not meddle with), so as to control or cross them; to direct, or check, or censure their proceedings against their will, or without special reason engaging us thereto: for this is also to usurp an undue authority, this argueth self-conceit, this containeth immodesty and arrogance.

4. We should not, without the desire or leave of parties concerned, intermeddle in the smaller temporal interests of others, upon pretence to further them, or with design to cross them; for every man should be left to himself to choose and to manage his own business, prosecuting it in the method he best liketh (consistent with law and justice toward others), without interruption or control: every man hath a right to do so, every man desireth it, every man commonly hath a capacity sufficient for it; for each man is apt to study his own business, to weigh his case, to poise his abilities with the circumstances in which he standeth; and thence is likely to get righter notions concerning the state of his affairs, to descry better ways of accomplishing them, than others less regarding them can do: every man is best acquainted with his own humour and temper, and thence can pick his business, and wind the management of it, so that it shall comply with them, or not grate upon them. However, as every man in point of interest and honour is most concerned in the success, and suffereth most by frustration of his endeavours, so it is equal that a free choice of his proceedings should be allowed him, without impediment or disturbance; which enjoying, he will more contentedly bear any disappointment that shall happen. This especially we say, in respect to matters of lesser consequence (such as most worldly interests are), by the ill success whereof our neighbour is not extremely damaged or hurt; for in such cases the immodesty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do commonly much outweigh any benefit we can presume by our meddling to procure.

5. We should not, indeed, even in matters of indifferent and innocent nature, so far meddle, as without considerable reason or need to infringe any man's liberty, to cross his humour, to obstruct his pleasure, however discordant these may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular gust for diet, for garb, for divertisements and disports (arising from particular complexion, or other unaccountable causes), and fit it is that he should satisfy it; it is enough that what he doeth seemeth good, and relisheth to himself: if we check him therein, we shall seem impertinent and troublesome, and therefore we shall really be so; for it is not our office to be tasters, to be dressers, to be masters of

[q] Prov. xvi. 10.

the sports to all men: we in such matters would please our own fancy, and therefore we should not about them offend others; it is incivility, it is injustice, to do it.

6. We should never offer to put a force upon any man's inclination, or strive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we shall commonly be disappointed, and we shall never come fairly off: for some are so tough, they will never yield to us; none will comply against the grain, without regret and displeasure: if you extort a compliance with your desire, you thereby do lose their good opinion and good will; for no man liketh to be overborne with violence or importunity.

7. We should not in conversation meddle so as to impose our opinions and conceits upon others: in conversation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our judgment, and declare our reasons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reasons persuade, we should have done; to press further is rude, to be displeased for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjust; for by the law of conversation every man taketh himself to have an absolute right to use and follow his own reason; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will pass for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the satisfaction which our own persuasion affordeth, is enough to content a just and sober mind, without triumphing over the understandings of others.

8. We should not ordinarily in converse affect or undertake to teach; for this implies a pretence to a kind of superiority, and a preferring ourselves to others in wisdom; which argueth vanity, and is offensive to those with whom we converse, who care not to be dealt with as disciples or underlings. We may with our equals modestly dispute the case upon even ground, as fellow-students of knowledge, or advocates of truth; but we must not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like masters or judges.

9. We should indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's discourse, or of taking his words out of his mouth:* for this is a rude way of dispossessing men of that which by common law of society they suppose themselves to enjoy, speaking their mind through, and perfecting their discourse; it is an implicit accusation of impertinency or weakness in their speech; it is an argument that we deem ourselves wiser than they, or able to speak more to the purpose: it is therefore an unsociable and distasteful practice.

10. We should be careful of intrenching upon any man's modesty in any way, either of commendation or dispraise, so as to put him to the blush, or to expose him unto scorn. Sober men care not to be the subjects of talk; no man can endure to be the object of sport: we should not therefore thrust any man upon the stage; it is vexatious, and therefore always discourteous, sometimes very injurious.

11. It is good to be very staunch and cautious of talking about other men and their concernments, in way of passing characters on them, or descanting upon their proceedings for want of other discourse: this is the common refuge of idleness, and the practice of fiddling gossips, who, because they will do nothing themselves, must be reflecting upon the doings of others; and that they may not say nothing, will talk impertinently: *ἀργαὶ καὶ περίεργοι*, St. Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous *tattlers and busybodies; and withal* (saith he of such gossiping women, 1 Tim. v. 13) *they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* To affect talking about others is indeed a great temptation to speaking things which we ought not to speak, words of unjust and uncharitable obloquy.[r]

12. Further; we should not be inquisitive into the designs of men; for this, beside the vain curiosity and impertinency of so doing, is to assail their modesty, and an adventure to vex both them and ourselves: thy neighbour, perhaps, as most advised men are, is desirous to keep his purpose close to himself; then by inquiry thou either forcest him unwillingly to disclose what he would not, or to give thee a repulse, which he

* Nec quid agatur in alia domus alia per te noverit — *Hier. Ep.* 2.

[r] Vid. Chrys. in Heb. xxxi. 3, Orat. 21.

liketh not to do;* and which whenever he doth, he is displeased: what is pumped out comes up against nature, and bringeth regret with it: and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet cause disturbance within; and ourselves are not well satisfied in the disappointment.†

13. We should not press into the retirements of men; to do so is not only immodest and rude, but unjust: it is immodest to desire to know from any man what he is ashamed or unwilling to show: it is rude to disturb any man in the enjoyment of his lawful freedom, to interrupt him in his conversation with himself, to obstruct his private satisfactions:‡ it is unjust to bereave a man of that leisure and opportunity which he possesseth, of doing that which he best liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in; of enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating upon his concerns, of examining his ways, of composing his passions, of studying truth, of devotion and intercourse with his God, of contriving and carrying on in anywise the welfare of his own soul. Why doth he retire, but to shun diversion, or that he may be master of his own time and thoughts? Why then are we so unkind, or so unjust, as to deprive him of those contents and advantages?

14. We should not pry or peep into men's secrets: it is a practice upon many accounts blameable.

It is commonly impertinent curiosity; for men hide things, because they do not think others concerned to know them: the concealment argueth their opinion to be such, and consequently that he is fondly curious who would search into them: *Why* (said he well to one, who, seeing him carry a basket covered, did ask what was in it) *dost thou seek to know, when thou seest it covered, that thou mayest not know?*§

It is foully discourteous, because offensively depriving men of the satisfaction they take in concealing their matters; encroaching upon the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any; trespassing upon their bashfulness, or frustrating their discretion; for therefore men choose to keep things close, because they like not, or judge it not expedient, to declare them. *Take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.*[a]

It is also grossly injurious to deal thus; for it is a robbery of what is most dear to men, which they with more care reserve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels: so that to break open the closet of a man's breast, to ransack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purposes, may well be deemed a worse sort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily esteemed very dishonest and treacherous; for men generally do suppose each other to be under a tacit, but well-understood compact, obliged mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own secrets, so) to abstain from attempting to discover the secrets of others; to do otherwise is therefore taken for an act of perfidious enmity, and a violation of mutual confidence.

In fine, to peep into chinks, to listen at doors or windows, to mind whispers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of insidious eavesdroppers, spies, and sycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowledge of what our neighbour would conceal doth casually arrive to us, it is advisable to smother it; it is inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice. *To reveal secrets*, is a practice condemned in scripture as odious and base: *He that goeth about as a talebearer, revealeth secrets. A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*[b]

Not to take up, or scatter reports prejudicial. Ecclus. xix. 7, 10.*

A wise man would not willingly anywise know the secrets of others, but gladly would shun them, although offering themselves to his knowledge; that he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, and the danger of venting

* Percontatorem fugito.

† Φιλοτεκνατία τῶν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις.

‡ Arcanum neque tu scrutaberis ullius unquam,
Commissumque tegas, et vino tortus et ira.

§ Τὸ τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου χαριέν τους τὸν ἐρωτῶντα τί φέρει συγκεκαλυμμένον, ἐιὰ τοῦτο συγκεκάλυπται. —Plut. περὶ πολυπρ.

* Μηδέποτε δευτερώσης λόγον—Ἀκήκοας λόγον; συναποθανέτω σοι.

[a] Eccles. vii. 21. [b] Prov. xx. 19; xi. 13.

them, to the distaste, wrong, or prejudice of others: and he is commended for his discretion, who, to a prince asking him, *What of his he should impart to him?* replied, *Whatever you please, except your secrets.** Them he well thought unsafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How foolish, then, is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to search into them!

15. We should not lie in wait to surprise or catch any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to insult upon his mistake or his disaster; to do thus is always ill manners, it is sometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodness in such cases would dispose a man to support, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his case needeth such meddling.

16. Lastly; we should never, at least with much earnestness, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not, handsomely pretend to understand so well as others: such are affairs beside our profession, which if we understand not, it is a folly, in a peremptory manner to treat of them; if we do understand them, it is yet indecent to contest or dictate about them, in the presence at least of those who profess them: thus should private men beware, at least in that magisterial or eager way, to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with scholastical, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any such matters, the comprehension whereof dependeth upon skill and exercise: no man should be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling: doing so is wont to create much offence; it hath usually much immodesty and much folly in it; often it containeth much injustice.

There are some more general rules concerning the matter in hand: I should now, if time did permit, insist upon some particular kinds of meddling, *advice*, *reproof*, *interposing in contests;* but, in regard to your patience, I shall proceed no further at present.

* Philippides apud Plut. in Apoph. ad Lysimach. Τινός σοι, εἶπεν, τῶν ἐμῶν μεταδῶ; κἀκεῖνος, Οὐ βούλει πλὴν τῶν ἀπορρήτων.

SERMON XXII.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 Thess. iv. 11.—*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.*

In a former discourse upon these words, I have already shewed,—

I. In what cases it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded some general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may discern in what cases meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I shall now give some directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And because they are many, I shall at present only insist upon three (referring others to other occasions:) they are, *advice*, *reproof*, *interposing in contests*, and contentions.

1. As to meddling in *advice*, we may do well to observe these directions:—

1. Advise not (except upon call) a superior, or one more eminent than thyself in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to advise, doth thereby claim to himself a kind of superiority, or excellence, above another; and it is not well consistent with the reverence and respect due to our betters to seem to do so. They should be wiser than we; at least it becometh us not to declare we think they are not. If they ask advice, we may without presumption give it, supposing it to be not so much their defect of knowledge as prudent caution, which maketh them willing to hear what any man can say to the case: but to obtrude it on them, argueth we think them to need it, and ourselves able to direct them; which is presumption, and will pass for arrogance.

2. We should not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thrust advice upon our equals, or upon any man not subject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it; for this is also an exalting ourselves in skill and wisdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowledge; that he is so weak as to need advice; and yet more

weak in not seeking it when needful from us; which practice consisteth not with modesty, and needs must breed offence: it is indeed unjust; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to choose his own counsellors.

3. Be not obstinate in pressing advice: if he that asketh thy counsel do not like it, desist from urging further, and rest content. If thou hast performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Christian, in advising what seemeth best to thee, that may abundantly satisfy thee; for the rest, *ipse viderit*, it is his concernment more than thine: if thou pretendest that he must follow thy advice, or art displeased because he doth not so, thou makest thyself a commander, not a counsellor; the which to appoint thee was beside his intention; he meant to seek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty; and thou art not just in pretending to so much.

4. Affect not to be a counsellor, nor let any considerations except of friendship, humanity, or charity, easily dispose thee to accept the office: it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or because it seemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy skill and ability; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to advise, because if the business succeedeth well according to thy advice, the principal usually carrieth away the profit and the praise; his judgment, his industry, his fortune, are applauded; little commendation or benefit accrueth to the counsellor: but if it prosper not, the main weight of blame is surely laid upon him that advised the course. If you, saith the party, and say the lookers on, had not thus directed, it had not thus fallen out.

5. Wherefore it is commonly expedient not to advise otherwise than with reservation and diffidence: it is, we may say, the most probable course I know, but I question whether it will succeed; I hope well of it, but do not thoroughly confide therein. This modest and discreet way, whatever the event shall be, will shelter thee from blame; yea, will advance the reputation of thy sagacity: for if it fail, thy reason to suspect will be approved; if it prosper, the goodness of thy judgment will be applauded: whereas the confident director, if success crosseth his advice, is exclaimed upon for his rashness; if success favoureth, he is not yet admired for his wisdom, because he seemed to be sure; it being more admirable to guess the best among doubtful things, than to determine that which is certain. So much for meddling about *advice*.

II. For *reproof* (which is necessary, and a duty upon some occasions), we may do well to follow these directions:—

1. Reprove not a superior; for it is exercising a power over him, and a punishing him; we thereby therefore do soar above our pitch, we confound ranks, and pervert the order settled among men;[a] the practice containeth irreverence and presumption; it seemeth injurious, and is ever odious. What the ministers of God, or spiritual pastors, do in this kind, they do it by special commission, or instinct (as the prophets in reprehending princes and priests, as St. John Baptist in reproving Herod;) or as ordinary superiors in the case of spiritual guidance, being *set over us* for that purpose, and *watching for our souls*, for which *they must render an account*:[b] yet they must do it with great moderation and discretion: *Πρεσβυτέρῳ μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς*, *Rebuke not an elder* (or one more aged than thyself), *but intreat him as a father*,[c] (that is, advise him in the most respectful and gentle manner,) is the charge of St. Paul to B. Timothy. In case of grievance or scandal, it becometh inferiors not proudly or peremptorily to criminate and tax, but humbly to remonstrate, and supplicate for redress.

2. Reprove not rashly, and without certain cognizance of the fact; for to reprove for things not done, or, which in moral reckoning is the same, for things not apparent, is both unjust, and argueth a malignant disposition: it is unjust to punish so much as the modesty of any man, without clear evidence and proof; it is malignity to suspect a man of ill, it is calumny to charge blame on him upon slender pretences, or doubtful surmises.

3. Reprove not also rashly as to the point of right, or without being able to convince the matter to be assuredly cul-

[a] Levit. xix. 17; Ephes. v. 11.
[b] Heb. xiii. 17.
[c] 1 Tim. v. 1.

pable: to reprove for things not bad, or not unquestionably such (for things that are, or perhaps may be, indifferent and innocent), is also unjust, and signifieth a tyrannical disposition: it is unjust anywise to punish a man without clear warrant of law; it is tyrannical to impose upon men our conceit, or to persecute them for using their liberty, following their judgment, or enjoying their humour; which in effect we do when we reprove them for that which we cannot prove blameable: it is, St. James saith, *a judging the law*, or charging it with defect, when we condemn persons for things not prohibited by it: *He* (saith the Apostle) *that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law.*[d]

Both these kinds of rash reproof are very inconvenient, as breeding needless offence and endless contention: for whoever is thus taxed will certainly take it ill, and will contend in his own defence: no man patiently, for no sufficient cause or sure ground, will lie under the stroke of reproof, which always smarteth, but then enrageth when it is supposed to be inflicted unjustly or maliciously: even those who contentedly will bear friendly reproof, can worse brook to be causelessly taxed.

4. Reprove not for slight matters; for such faults or defects as proceed from natural frailty, from inadvertency, from mistake in matters of small consequence; for it is hard to be just in such reproof, or so to temper it as not to exceed the measure of blame due to such faults:* they occur so often, that we should never cease to be carping, if we do it upon such occasions; it is not worth the while, it is not handsome, to seem displeased with such little things; it is spending our artillery upon a game not worth the killing. Reproof is too grave and stately a thing to be prostituted upon so mean things; to use it upon small cause derogateth from its weight, when there is considerable reason for it; friendship, charity, and humanity, should cover such offences. In fine, it is unseemly to reprove men for such things as all men, as themselves, are so continually subject unto: it is therefore better to let such things pass without any mark of displeasure or dislike.

5. Reprove not unseasonably; not when a person is indisposed to bear reproof, or unfit to profit thereby; not when there is likely to be no good effect come from it; when thou shalt only thereby conjure up an evil spirit of displeasure and enmity against thyself. Reproof is a thing of itself not good or pleasant, but sometimes needful, because wholesome and good in order to the end; it should therefore be administered as physic, then only when the patient is fit to receive it, and it may serve to correct his distemper; otherwise you will only make him more sick, and very angry.

It is ever almost unseasonable to reprove some persons, as scorners, impudent, incorrigibly profligate persons, who will hate the reprover without regarding the reproof: *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.*[e] To be maligned, to be derided, to be aspersed with reproach and slander, is all one shall get by reproving such persons: it is both prostituting good advice, and exposing oneself to mischief, as our Saviour intimateth in that prohibition: *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*[f]

As such men ever, so most men in some seasons, are uncapable of reproof; so are men in calamity, who are discomposed by grief, the which is rather to be mitigated by comfort than increased and exasperated by blame; so are men in a passion, who have no ears to hear, no reason to judge, no will to comply with advice; reproof is apt to produce rather anger and ill-blood, than any contrition or kindly remorse in persons so affected.

It is also usually not seasonable to reprove men publicly, when their modesty is highly put to it, and their reputation grievously suffereth; for this is an extreme sort of punishment, and is taken for needless: it is extreme, because men had rather suffer any way than in their honour; it is deemed needless, because it may be ministered privately.

* Mitem animum, et mores modicis erroribus æquos.—*Juv. Sat.* 14.

[d] James iv. 11.

[e] Prov. ix. 7, 8; xv. 12. [f] Matt. vii. 6.

6. Reprove mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner, in the gentlest terms; not in a haughty or imperious way, not hastily or fiercely: not with sour looks, or in bitter language; for these ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the best effects of reproof: they do certainly inflame and disturb the person reproved; they breed wrath, disdain, and hatred against the reprover; but do not so well enlighten the man to see his error, or affect him with kindly sense of his miscarriage, or dispose him to correct his fault, such reproofs look rather like the wounds and persecutions of enmity, than as remedies ministered by a friendly hand; they harden men with stomach and scorn to mend upon such occasion. If reproof doth not savour of humanity, it signifieth nothing; it must be like a bitter pill wrapped in gold, and tempered with sugar, otherwise it will not go down, or work effectually.

7. Affect not to be reprehensive; seem not willingly to undertake the place of a reprover; appear to be merely drawn thereto by sense of duty, or exigency of friendship, or constraint of charity and good-will. For to affect reproving is a sign of ill-nature and arrogance; that we delight to observe the faults, that we love to insult upon the infirmities and infelicities of other men; which is the part of a domineering and cruel humour. A truly good man indeed would be glad to be excused from the office; it is the most unpleasant thing he can do, to be raking in men's sores, and causing smart to his neighbours; far more gladly would he be commending their good deeds, and cherishing their virtue. Nothing, therefore, but conscience and charity can put him on this employment. But so much for meddling in reproof.

III. Another kind of meddling is, *interposing in the contests* and contentions of others. As to this, we may, briefly, do well to observe these directions.

1. We should never meddle, so as to raise dissensions, or to do such things as breed them: we should by no means create misunderstandings, or distastes, between our neighbours: we should not instil jealousies, or surmises: we should not misconstrue words or actions, to an offensive sense or consequence: we should not convey spiteful tales: we should not disclose the secrets of one to another. These practices engender enmity and strife among men; and are therefore inhuman, or rather diabolical: for the Devil is the great makebate in the world.

2. We should not foment dissensions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting the strife, or aggravating the causes thereof; it is not good to strengthen the quarrel, by siding with one part, except that part be notoriously oppressed or abused: in such a case indeed, when justice calleth for them, we may lend our advice and assistance; and may bear the inconvenience of being engaged, as Moses honestly and generously did, when he succoured his brother that suffered wrong: otherwise it is advisable to keep ourselves out of the fray, that we do not encourage it by our taking part, and involve ourselves in the mischiefs of it.

3. Especially we should not make ourselves parties in any faction, where both sides are eager and passionate; for then, even they who have the juster cause are wont to do unjust things, in which it is hard for any man engaged not to have share, at least not to undergo the imputation of them: it is wisdom, therefore, in such cases to hold off, and to retain a kind of indifferency; to meddle with them is, as the Wise Man saith, *to take a dog by the ears*;[5] which he that doth, can hardly take care enough of his fingers.

4. We should not interpose ourselves (without invitation) to be arbitrators in points of difference: we may cautiously mediate, perhaps, or advise to agreement; but not pretend as judges with authority to decide the controversy: this savoureth of arrogance, this will work trouble to us, and bring the displeasure of both sides upon us; it is hard in doing so, to avoid becoming parties, and offending one side.* Our Lord therefore did, we see, wave this office, and put off the invitation with a *Who made me a divider or a judge between you?*

5. If we would at all meddle in these cases, it should be only in endeavouring, by the most fair and prudent means, to renew peace, and reconcile the dissen-

* Οἱ ἐν μέσῳ ὄντες ὠθοῦνται ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων.—Arist.

[5] Prov. xxvi. 17.

ters; if we can, by exhortation and persuasion to peace, by removing misprisions, by representing things handsomely, by mitigating their passions, bring them to good terms, this is a laudable meddling, this is a blessed practice. So I leave this particular, and finish the directive part of my discourse.

IV. I shall now further only briefly propose some considerations inducing to quietness, and dissuasive from pragmaticalness; such as arise from the nature, properties, causes, and effects of each: serving to commend the one, and disparage the other.

1. Consider that quietness is just and equal, pragmaticalness is injurious. When we contain ourselves quiet, and mind only our own business, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's repute; we keep ourselves within our bounds, and trespass not on the place or interest of our neighbour; we disturb not the right order and course of things: but in being pragmatical we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their business; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakness and incapacity to dispatch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, upon our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourselves above them; we assume to ourselves in many respects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others should invade his office, or intrude into his business; therefore, in justice, every man should forbear doing so toward others.

2. Quietness signifieth humility, modesty, and sobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourselves more wise than our neighbour; that we allow every man his share of discretion; that we take others for able and skilful enough to understand and manage their own affairs: but pragmaticalness argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourselves for the only men of wisdom, at least for more wise than those into whose business we thrust ourselves.

3. Quietness is beneficial to the world, preserving the general order of things, disposing men to keep within their rank and station, and within the sphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and business proper to them; whereby, as themselves do well, so the public doth thrive: but pragmaticalness disturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the distinction between superior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's business uncertain; while some undertake that which belongeth not to them, one busybody often, as we find by experience, is able to disturb and pester a whole society.

4. Quietness preserveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being suffered undisturbedly to proceed in his course, according to his mind and pleasure: but pragmaticalness breedeth dissensions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with those who offer to control them, or cross them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of choosing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppose those who attempt to bereave them of it; whence between the busy body assailing, and others defending their liberty, combustions must arise.

5. Quietness, to the person endued with it, or practising it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to disquiet or cross him; he keepeth himself out of broils and factions: but the busybody createth vexation and trouble to himself; others will be ready to molest him in his proceedings, because he disturbeth them in theirs: he that will have a sickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers be rapped; men do not more naturally brush off flies, which buzz about their ears, sit upon their faces or hands, and sting or tickle them, than they strive to drive away clamorous and encroaching busybodies. *Let* (saith St. Peter) *none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters:*[h] it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to suffer, or which men are apt to punish soundly: and so the Wise Man, implying the fondness and danger of it, *He* (saith he) *that passeth by, and meddleth with strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears;*[i] that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will snarl at him and bite him.

6. Quietness is a decent and lovely

[h] 1 Pet. iv. 15. [i] Prov. xxvi. 17.

thing, as signifying good disposition, and producing good effects; but pragmaticalness is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbour to a quiet person, as who by the steady calmness and smoothness of his humour, the inoffensive stillness and sweetness of his demeanour, doth afford all the pleasure of conversation, without any cross or trouble. But no man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infesting him by his turbulent humour, his obstreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, upon all occasions, without invitation or consent, will be thrusting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that course, taxing all proceeding, usurping a kind of jurisdiction over him and his actions: no man will like, or can well endure such a neighbour. It is commonly observed, that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathsome to man; and of all prides, this is the most offensive and odious: for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not issuing forth to trouble others, may indeed well be despised, as hugely silly and vain; but that which breaketh out to the disturbance and vexation of others, is hated as molestful and mischievous.

7. Quietness adorneth any profession, bringing credit, respect, and love thereto; but pragmaticalness is scandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cause: men usually do cloak their pragmatical behaviour with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindness to some party which they have espoused; but thereby they do really cast reproach, and draw prejudice upon their side: if it be a good cause, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to such carriage, as if it did produce or allow disorder; if it be a bad cause, they wrong themselves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a less fault to be calm and remiss in an ill way, than busy or violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more prejudice to religion, or hath brought more disparagement upon truth, than boisterous and unseasonable zeal; pretending in ways of passion, of fierceness, of rudeness to advance them: a quiet sectary doth to most men's fancy appear more lovely, than he that is furiously and factiously orthodox: the ornament of *a meek and quiet spirit is* (saith St. Peter) *in God's sight, of great price*;[‡] and it is also very estimable in the opinion of men.

8. Quiet is a safe practice, keeping men not only from needless incumbrances of business, but from the hazards of it, or being charged with its bad success: but pragmaticalness is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler surely will be loaded with the blame:* the profit and commendation of prosperities will accrue to the persons immediately concerned; but the disaster and damage will be imputed to those who meddled in the business: to excuse or ease themselves, men will cast the disgrace on those who did project or further the undertaking: he therefore that would be secure, let him be quiet; he that loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatical.

9. It is consequently a great point of discretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and safety without any trouble; and it is a manifest folly to be pragmatical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to seek dissatisfaction to others, and danger to himself; it being also to affect many not only inconveniences, but impossibilities.

Is it possible for any man to grasp or compass an infinity of business? Yet this the pragmatical man seemeth to drive at; for the buinesses of other men are infinite, and into that abyss he plungeth himself, who passeth beyond his own bounds; by the same reason that he meddleth with any beside his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; so he is sure to have work enough, but fruit surely little enough of his pains.

Is it imaginable that we can easily bring others to our bent, or induce men to submit their business to our judgment and humour? Will not he that attempteth such things assuredly expose himself to disappointment and regret? Is it not therefore wisdom to let every man have his own way, and pursue his concernments without any check or control from us?

10. We may also consider, that every man hath business of his own sufficient

* Τῳ ὄντι φαίνεται ὁ κατὰ τὴν ἡσυχίαν βίος ἀκίνδυνόν τι καὶ ἀσφαλὲς ἔχειν.—Chrys. apud Plut.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 4.

to employ him; to exercise his mind, to exhaust his care and pains, to take up all his time and leisure.* To study his own near concernments, to provide for the necessities and conveniences of his life, to look to the interests of his soul, to be diligent in his calling, to discharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man;† well it is, if some of them do not encumber and distract him: he that will set himself with all his might to perform these things, will find enough to do; he need not seek further for work; he need not draw more trouble on him.

Seeing, then, every man hath burden enough on his shoulders, imposed by God and nature, it is vain to take on him more load, by engaging himself in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to shake off his own business, or to become overburdened and oppressed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence observable, and it needs must happen, that those who meddle with the business of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can seldom be at home; they that know others most are least acquainted with themselves: and the wise Hebrew, *The wisdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure* (σοφία σοφιστοῦ ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς,) *and he that hath little business shall be wise:*[k] (ὁ ἐλασσούμενος πράξει αὐτοῦ σοφισθήσεται.) Whence it is scarce possible that a pragmatical man should be a good man; that is, such an one who honestly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

Philosophers, therefore, generally have advised men to shun needless occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavour ἁπλοῦν ἑαυτοὺς, *to simplify ourselves*, or to get into a condition requiring of us the least that can be to do. St. Paul intended the same when he advised us, μὴ ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις *not to be entangled in the negotiations of life*:[l] and our Saviour, when he touched Martha for *being troubled about many things.*[m] So far, therefore, we should be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we should labour to contract our own, and reduce them to the fewest that we can; otherwise we shall hardly attain wisdom, or be able to perform our duty.*

11. But suppose us to have much spare time, and to want business, so that we are to seek for divertisement, and must for relief fly to curiosity;† yet it is not advisable to meddle with the affairs of other men; there are divers other ways more innocent, more safe, more pleasant, more advantageous to divert ourselves, and satisfy curiosity.‡

Nature offereth herself, and her inexhaustible store of appearances, to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, survey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her secrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors, presenteth matter, wherewith innocently, pleasantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble sciences, by applying our minds to the study whereof, we may not only divert them, but improve and cultivate them: the histories of ages past, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are described, and their actions reported, may afford us useful pleasure and pastime; thereby we may learn as much, and understand the world as well, as by the most curious inquiry into the present actions of men; there we may observe, we may scan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we please, without danger of offence: there are extant numberless books, wherein the wisest and most ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and exposed their most secret cogitations unto us; in pursuing them we may sufficiently busy ourselves, and let our idle hours pass gratefully; we may meddle with ourselves, studying our own dispositions, examining our principles and purposes, reflecting on our thoughts, words and actions; striving

* Πλεῖστα πράσσων πλεῖστ' ἁμαρτάνει βροτῶν. —Eurip.

† Ἀπράγμονας εἶναι ἐκκλίνειν γὰρ τὸ καθῆκον.— Zenon. apud Laert. Chrysost. tom. ii. Eth. 64.

[k] Ecclus. xxxviii. 26. [l] 2 Tim. ii. 4.

[m] Luke x. 41,—τυρβάζῃ περὶ πολλά.

* Ὁ σοφὸς, ἰδιοπράγμων, καὶ ἀπράγμων.—Democ. Sen. Ep. 72, 22. Tertullian calleth Stoicism, Quietis magisterium.—*De Pall.* v.

† Tacitus saith of the Stoics sect,—quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes facit.

‡ Omnium occupatorum conditio misera est, eorum tamen miserrima, qui ne suis quidem occupationibus laborant.—*Sen. de Brev. Vitæ*, xix.

thoroughly to understand ourselves; to do this we have an unquestionable right, and by it we shall obtain vast benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by puddering in the designs or doings of others. Pragmaticalness, then, as it is very dangerous and troublesome, so it is perfectly needless; it is a kind of idleness, but of all idleness the most unreasonable:* it is at least worse than idleness, in St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion. For, *I had rather*, said he, *be idle more than I should, than over-busy.*† Other considerations might be added; but these, I hope, may be sufficient to restrain this practice, so unprofitable and uneasy to ourselves, and, for the most part, so injurious and troublesome to others.

Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTH. xxii. 37.—*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.*

THIS text is produced by our Saviour out of Moses's law,[a] in answer to a question wherewith a learned Pharisee thought to pose or puzzle him.‡ The question was, *Which was the great* and *first commandment in the law?*§ a question which, it seems, had been examined, and determined among the doctors, in the schools of those days (for in St. Luke,[b] to the like question intimated by our Saviour, another lawyer readily yields the same answer, and is therefore commended by our Saviour, with a *recte respondisti, thou hast answered rightly;*) so that had our Saviour answered otherwise, he had, we may suppose, been taxed of ignorance and unskilfulness; perhaps also of error and heterodoxy; to convict him of which, seems to have been the design of this Jewish trier or tempter (for he is said to ask πειράζων αὐτόν, *trying*, or tempting, *him.*) But our Saviour defeats his captious intent, by answering, not only according to truth and the reason of the thing, but agreeably to the doctrine then current, and as the lawyer himself out of his memory and learning would have resolved it: and no wonder, since common sense dictates, that the law enjoining sincere and entire love toward God is necessarily the first and chief, or the most fundamental law of all religion; for that whosoever doth believe the being of God, according to the most common notion that name bears, must needs discern himself obliged first and chiefly to perform those acts of mind and will toward him, which most true and earnest love do imply: different expressions of love may be prescribed, peculiar grounds of love may be declared in several ways of religion; but in the general and main substance of the duty all will conspire, all will acknowledge readily, that it is love we chiefly owe to God; the duty which he may most justly require of us, and which will be most acceptable to him. It was then indeed the great commandment of the old (or rather of the young and less perfect) religion of the Jews, and it is no less of the more adult and improved religion which the Son of God did institute and teach: the difference only is, that Christianity declares more fully how we should exercise it; and more highly engages us to observe it; requires more proper and more substantial expressions thereof; extends our obligation as to the matter, and intends it as to the degree thereof: for as it represents Almighty God in his nature and his doings more lovely than any other way of religion, either natural or instituted, hath done, or could do; so it proportionably raises our obligation to love him: it is as St. Paul speaketh, τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας, *the* last *drift*,[c] or the supreme pitch *of the* evangelical *profession*, and institution, to love; to love God first, and then our neighbour *out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned*:[d] it is *the bond*, or knot *of* that *perfection* which the Gospel enjoins us to aspire to; it is the first and principal of those goodly

* Ἀνδρὶ Λυδῷ πράγματα οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐξελθὼν ἐπρίατο.—Adag. apud Suidam.

† Ἀργὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον τοῦ δίοντος, ἢ περίεργος δέχομαι.—Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

‡ πειράζων αὐτόν. § πρώτη ἐντολή.

[a] Deut. vi. 5; x. 12. [b] Luke x. 27. [c] 1 Tim. i. 5. [d] Col. iii. 14.

fruits, which *the Holy Spirit*[e] of Christ produceth in good Christians. It is therefore plainly with us also the great commandment and chief duty; chiefly great in its extent, in its worth, in its efficacy, and influence: most great it is, in that it doth (eminently at least, or virtually) contain all other laws and duties of piety; they being all as branches making up its body, or growing out of it as their root. St. Paul saith of the love toward our neighbour, that it is πλήρωμα τοῦ νόμου, *a full performance of the laws* concerning him; and that *all commandments*, ἀνακεφαλαιοῦνται, *are recapitulated*, or summed up, *in this one saying*, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*:[g] and by like, or greater reason are all the duties of piety comprised in the love of God; which is the chief of those two hinges, *upon which*, as our Saviour here subjoins, *the whole law and the prophets do hang*.[h] So great is this duty in extent: and it is no less in proper worth; both as it immediately respects the most excellent and most necessary performances of duty (employing our highest faculties in their best operations), and as it imparts virtue and value to all other acts of duty: for no sacrifice is acceptable, which is not kindled by this heavenly fire;[i] no offering sweet and pure, which is not seasoned by this holy salt; no action is truly good or commendable, which is not conjoined with, or doth not proceed from the love of God; that is not performed with a design to please God, or, at least, with an opinion that we shall do so thereby. If a man perform any good work not out of love to God, but from any other principle, or any other design (to please himself or others, to get honour or gain thereby), how can it be acceptable to God, to whom it hath not any due regard? And what action hath it for its principle, or its ingredient, becomes sanctified thereby, in great measure pleasing and acceptable to God; such is the worth and value thereof. It is also the great commandment for efficacy and influence, being naturally productive of obedience to all other commandments; especially of the most genuine and sincere obedience; no other principle being in force and activity comparable thereto (fear may drive to a compliance with some, and hope may draw to an observance of others; but it is love, that with a kind of willing constraint and kindly violence carries on cheerfully, vigorously, and swiftly, to the performance of all God's commandments.[j] *If any man love me*, saith our Saviour, *he will keep my words*:[k] to keep his word is a natural and necessary result of love to him: *This is the love of God*, saith St. John, *that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*;[l] it is the nature of that love to beget a free and delightful obedience:) such, then, is the subject of our discourse; even the sum, the soul, the spring of all our religion and duty. And because it is requisite, both for our direction how to do, and the examination of ourselves whether we do as we ought, that we should understand what we are so far obliged to; that we may be able to perform it, and that we be effectually disposed thereto, I shall use this method: I will first endeavour to explain the nature of this love commanded us; then, to show some means of attaining it; lastly, to propound some inducements to the purchase and practice thereof.

I. For the first part; we may describe love in general (for it seems not so easy to define it exactly) to be an affection or inclination of the soul toward an object, proceeding from an apprehension and esteem of some excellency or some conveniency therein (its beauty, worth, or usefulness), producing thereupon, if the object be absent or wanting, a proportionable desire, and consequently an endeavour to obtain such a propriety therein, such a possession thereof, such an approximation or union thereto, as the thing is capable of; also a regret and displeasure in the failing so to obtain it; or in the want, absence, and loss thereof; likewise begetting a complacence, satisfaction, and delight in his presence, possession, or enjoyment; which is moreover attended with a goodwill thereto, suitable to its nature; that is, with a desire that it should arrive unto,

[e] Matt. v. 48; Gal. v. 22.
[f] Rom. xiii. 9, 10.
[g] Gal. v. 14.
[h] Matt. xxii. 40.
[i] Levit. ii. 13; ix. 24; xx. 1.
[j] 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 John. ii. 5.
[k] John xiv. 23.
[l] 1 John. v. 3.

and continue in its best state; with a delight to perceive it so to thrive and flourish; with a displeasure to see it suffer or decay in anywise; with a consequent endeavour to advance it in all good, and preserve it from all evil. Which description containing the chief properties of love in common, do in some sort (not to insist upon abstracted notions, or in examples remote from our purpose) all of them will agree to that love which we owe to God, according to the tenor of this law, and in the degree therein expressed; that is, in the best manner and highest degree; for even of this divine love the chief properties (prerequisite thereto, or intimately conjoined therewith, or naturally resulting from it) I conceive are these:—

1. A right apprehension and firm persuasion concerning God, and consequently a high esteem of him as most excellent in himself and most beneficial to us: for such is the frame of our soul, that the perceptive part doth always go before the appetive, that affection follows opinion, that no object otherwise moves our desire, than as represented by reason, or by fancy, good unto us: what effect will the goodliest beauty, or the sweetest harmony, have upon him who wants sense to discern, or judgment to prize them? This is our natural way of acting; and according to it, that we may in due measure love God, he must appear proportionably amiable, and desirable to us: we must entertain worthy thoughts of him, as full of all perfection in himself; as the fountain of all good; as the sole author of all that happiness we can hope for, or receive: as he, in possession of whom we shall possess all things desirable; in effect and virtue, all riches, all honours, all pleasure, all good that we are capable of; and without whom we can enjoy no real good or true content: which esteem of him, how can it otherwise than beget affection toward him? If the faint resemblances, or the slender participations of such excellencies (of that incomprehensible wisdom, that uncontrollable power, that unconfined bounty, that unblemished purity, which are united in him, and shine from him with a perfect lustre; if, I say, the very faint resemblances, and imperfect participations of these excellencies) discerned in other things, are apt to raise our admiration, and allure our affection toward them; if the glimmering of some small inconsiderable benefit, the shadow of real profit discovered in these inferior empty things, is able so strongly to attract our eyes, and fix our hearts upon them, why should not from a like, but so much greater cause, the like effect proceed? whence can it be that the apprehension of an object so infinitely lovely, so incomparably beneficial (if not passing cursorily through our fancy, but deeply impressed upon our mind) should not proportionably affect and incline us toward him with all that desire, that delight, that good-will which are proper to love? If we think, as the Psalmist did, that *there is none in heaven or in earth comparable to God*,[m] (comparable in essential perfection, comparable in beneficial influence), why should we not be disposed also to say with him, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*[n] Such a reverent esteem is the proper foundation upon which true love is built, and which upholds it: whence, as the love of God doth commonly denote all the duties of religion; so doth fear (or reverence to him) likewise in scripture-style comprehend and express them all; it being the root from whence love doth sprout, and by which it is nourished; it being the beginning of that true wisdom by which we embrace and fasten our affection upon the sovereign good.[o] Hence we may observe that those devout persons, whose hearts were fullest of this love, their minds were most employed in meditation upon the divine excellencies, and upon the beneficial emanations from them in bounty and mercy upon the creatures; their tongues being tuned by their thoughts, and their inward esteem breaking forth into praise. *Every day, all the day long, at all times did they bless God, praise his name, speak of his righteousness, show forth his salvation*,[p] as the Psalmist expresses his practice, arising from love enlivened by the esteem of God, and the apprehension of his excellent goodness: from whence also that strong

[m] Psal. lxxxix. 6. [n] Psal. lxxiii. 25.
[o] Compare Psal. cxiii. 17, 18; xxxi. 23; xxxiv. 9; cxlv. 19, 20.
[p] Psal. cxlvi. 7; civ. 33; xxxiv. 1; lxxi. 15; cxlv. 2; xxxv. 28; lxxi. 8.

faith, that constant hope, that cheerful confidence they reposed in him; that hearty approbation of all his counsels and purposes; that full acquiescence of mind in his proceedings; that entire submission of their understanding to his discipline, and resignation of their will to his good pleasure; that yielding up themselves (their souls and bodies, their lives and goods) to his disposal, with all the like high effects and pregnant signs of love did flow: but,

2. Another property of this love is an earnest desire of obtaining a propriety in God; of possessing him, in a manner, and enjoying him; of approaching him, and being, so far as may be, united to him. When we stand upon such terms with any person, that we have a free access unto, and a familiar intercourse with him; that his conversation is profitable and delightful to us; that we can upon all occasions have his advice and assistance; that he is always ready in our needs, and at our desire, to employ what is in him of ability for our good and advantage, we may be said to own such a person, to possess and enjoy him; to be tied, as it were, and joined to him (as it is said *the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, so that he loved him as his own soul.*[q]) And such a propriety in, such a possession of, such an alliance and conjunction to himself, God vouchsafes to them who are duly qualified for so great a good. *He was not ashamed*, saith the Apostle concerning the faithful patriarchs, *to be called their God;*[r] to be appropriated in a manner unto them; and, *He that acknowledgeth the son*, saith St. John concerning good Christians, καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, *hath* (or possesseth) *the father also:* and *to seek; to find; to draw near to; to cleave unto; to abide with, to abide in;*[s] and such other phrases, frequently do occur in scripture, denoting that near relation which good men stand in toward God; implying that he affords them a continual liberty of access and coming into his especial presence, that he admits them to a kind of converse and communion with himself, full of spiritual benefit and delight;[t] that bearing an especial goodwill and favour toward them, he is disposed to exert his infinite wisdom and power in their behalf; is ready to impart all needful and convenient good unto them (help in their needs, supply in wants, protection in dangers; the direction, assistance, and comfort of his Holy Spirit; pardon of sins and peace of conscience; all the blessings of grace here, and all the felicities of glory hereafter;) such an interest, as it were, in God, and a title unto him, such a possession and enjoyment of him we are capable of obtaining: and as that enjoyment is in itself infinitely above all things desirable; so, if we love God, we cannot surely but be earnestly desirous thereof: a cold indifferency about it, a faint wishing for it, a slothful tendency after it, are much on this side love; it will inflame our heart, it will transport our mind, it will beget a vigorous and lively motion of soul toward it: for love, you know, is commonly resembled unto, yea even assumes the name of fire; for that it warms the breast, agitates the spirits, quickens all the powers of soul, and sets them on work in desire and pursuance of the beloved object: you may imagine as well fire without heat or activity, as love without some ardency of desire. *Longing and thirsting of soul; fainting for, and panting after; crying out, and stretching forth the hands toward God;*[u] such are the expressions signifying the good Psalmist's love; by so apt and so pathetical resemblances doth he set out the vehemency of his desire to enjoy God. I need not add concerning endeavour; for that by plain consequence doth necessarily follow desire: the thirsty soul will never be at rest till it have found out its convenient refreshment: if we, as David did, do *long after God*, we shall also with him *earnestly seek God;* nor ever be at rest till we have found him. Coherent with this is a

3. Third property of this love, that is, a great complacence, satisfaction, and delight in the enjoyment of God: in the sense of having such a propriety in him; in the partaking those emanations of favour and beneficence from him; and

[q] 1 Sam. xviii. 1.
[r] Heb. xi. 16.
[s] 1 John ii. 23; Ps. cxix. 2; Isa. lxv. 1; Deut. xi. 22; Josh. xxiii. 8; 1 Cor. vi. 17; Acts xi. 23; John xv. 4; xvii. 21.
[t] 1 John ii. 24.
[u] Psal. lxxxiv. 2; xlii. 1; lxiii. 1; cxliii. 6.

consequently in the instruments conveying, in the means conducing to such enjoyment: for joy and content are the natural fruits of obtaining what we love, what we much value, what we earnestly desire. Yea, what we chiefly love, if we become possessed thereof, we easily rest satisfied therewith, although all other comforts be wanting to us. The covetous person, for instance, who dotes upon his wealth, let him be pinched with the want of conveniences; let his body be wearied with toil; let his mind be distracted with care; let him be surrounded with obloquy and disgrace—*at mihi plaudo ipse domi;* he nevertheless enjoys himself in beholding his beloved pelf: the ambitious man, likewise, although his state be full of trouble and disquiet; though he be the mark of common envy and hatred; though he be exposed to many crosses and dangers; yet while he stands in power and dignity, among all those thorns of care and fear, his heart enjoys much rest and pleasure. In like manner we may observe those pious men, whose hearts were endued with this love, by the present sense, or assured hope of enjoying God, supporting themselves under all wants and distresses; *rejoicing*, yea, *boasting and exulting*, in their afflictions;[v] and no wonder, while they conceived themselves secure in the possession of their hearts' wish; of that which they incomparably valued and desired above all things; which by experience they have found so comfortable and delicious: *O taste and see* (exclaims the Plalmist, inspired with this passion), *O taste and see that the Lord is good: How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! They* (they who enjoy it) *shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures; A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness:*[w] so did those devout practisers of this duty express the satisfaction they felt in God, and in those things whereby he did impart the enjoyment of himself unto them. So did *the light of God's* countenance cheer their heart; so did *his loving-kindness* appear *better than life itself unto them.* Hence do they so frequently enjoin and exhort us *to be glad; to delight ourselves; to glory; to rejoice continually in the Lord;*[x] in the sense of his goodness, in the hope of his favour; the doing so being an inseparable property of love; to which we adjoin another.

4. The feeling much displeasure and regret in being deprived of such enjoyment; in the absence or distance, as it were, of God from us; the loss or lessening of his favour; the subtraction of his gracious influences from us: for surely answerable to the love we bear unto anything will be our grief for the want or loss thereof: it was a shrewd argument which the poet used to prove that men loved their monies better than their friends, because—*majore tumultu plorantur nummi, quam funera*—they more lamented the loss of those than the death of these: indeed, that which a man principally affects, if he is bereaved thereof, be his condition otherwise how prosperous and comfortable soever, he cannot be contented; all other enjoyments become unsavoury and unsatisfactory to him. And so it is in our case, when God, although only for trial, according to his wisdom and good pleasure, hides his face, and withdraws his hand; leaving the soul in a kind of desolation and darkness; not finding that ready aid in distress, not feeling that cheerful vivacity in obedience, not tasting that sweet relish of devotion, which have been usually afforded thereto: if love reside in the heart, it will surely dispose it to a sensible grief; it will inspire such exclamations as those of the Psalmist: *How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy face? Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble: Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies: Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it.*[y] Even our Saviour himself in such a case, when God seemed for a time to withdraw the light of his countenance and the protection of his helpful hand from him (or to frown and lay his heavy hand upon him), had his soul περίλυπον ἕως θανάτου, *extremely grieved* and *full of deadly an-*

[v] Luke vi. 23; 1 Pet. iv. 13; Rom. v. 3; Col. i. 24.

[w] Psal. xxxiv. 8; xxxvi. 7; lxxxiv. 1, 10; lxiii. 5.

[x] Neh. ix. 25; Psal. iv. 6; lxiii. 3; xxxiii. 1; xxxii. 11; cv. 3; cvii. 12; xxxvii. 4.

[y] Psal. lxxxix. 46; lxix. 16; xxx. 7; xlii. 3.

guish;[z] neither surely was it any other cause than excess of love, which made that temporary desertion so grievous and bitter to him, extorting from his most meek and patient heart that woful complaint, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* But especially when *our iniquities have* (as the Prophet expresseth it) *separated between our God and us*; and *our sins have hid his face from us*: when that *thick cloud* hath eclipsed the light of his countenance, and intercepted his gracious influences;[a] when by wilfully offending we have, as the Israelites are said to have done, *rejected our God, cast him off*, and *driven him from us*;[b] so depriving ourselves of propriety in him, and the possession of his favour, then if any love be alive in us, it will prompt us, with those good men in their penitential agonies, to be grievously sensible of, and sorely to bewail that our wretched condition; there *will not*, if we so heartily love God, and value his favour as they did, *be any soundness in our flesh, or rest in our bones; our spirit will be overwhelmed within us, and our heart within us desolate. Our heart will be smitten and withered like grass*,[c] upon the consideration and sense of so inestimable a loss. Love will render such a condition very sad and uneasy to us; will make all other delights insipid and distasteful; all our life will become bitter and burdensome to us; neither, if it in any measure abides in us, shall we receive content, till by humble deprecation we have regained some glimpse of God's favour, some hope of being reinstated in our possession of him.[d] Further yet,

5. Another property of this love is, to bear the highest good will toward God; so as to wish heartily and effectually, according to our power, to procure all good to him, and to delight in it; so as to endeavour to prevent and to remove all evil, if I may so speak, that may befall him, and to be heartily displeased therewith. Although no such benefit or advantage can accrue to God which may increase his essential and indefectible happiness; no harm or damage can arrive that may impair it (for he can be neither really more or less rich, or glorious, or joyful, than he is;[e] neither have our desire or our fear, our delight or our grief, our designs or our endeavours, any object, any ground in those respects;) yet hath he declared, that there be certain interests and concernments, which, out of his abundant goodness and condescension, he doth tender and prosecute as his own:[f] as if he did really receive advantage by the good, and prejudice by the bad success, respectively belonging to them; that he earnestly desires, and is greatly delighted with some things, very much dislikes, and is grievously displeased with other things: for instance, that he bears a fatherly affection toward his creatures, and earnestly desires their welfare; and delights to see them enjoy the good he designed them; as also dislikes the contrary events; doth commiserate and condole their misery; that he is consequently well pleased, when piety and justice, peace and order (the chief means conducing to our welfare), do flourish; and displeased, when impiety and iniquity, dissension and disorder (those certain sources of mischief to us), do prevail; that he is well satisfied with our rendering to him that obedience, honour, and respect, which are due to him; and highly offended with our injurious and disrespectful behaviour toward him, in the commission of sin and violation of his most just and holy commandments: so that there wants not sufficient matter of our exercising good-will both in affection and action toward God; we are capable both of wishing, and (in a manner, as he will interpret and accept it) of doing good to him, by our concurrence with him, in promoting those things which he approves and delights in, and in removing the contrary. And so surely shall we do, if we truly love God: for love, as it would have the object to be its own, as it intends to enjoy it, so it would have it in its best state, and would put it thereinto, and would conserve it therein: and would thence contribute all it is able to the welfare, to the ornament, to the pleasure and content thereof. *What is it* (saith Cicero) *to love, but to will or desire, that the*

[z] Matt. xxvi. 38; xxvii. 46.
[a] Isa. lix. 2; Jer. v. 25; Isa. xliv. 26.
[b] 1 Sam viii. 7; x. 9.
[c] Psal. vi. xxxv. xxxviii. li. cii. cxxx. cxliii. xxxviii. 3; cxliii. 4; cii. 4.
[d] Psal. vi. 4; xxxviii. 21; li. 11; cii. 2; cxliii. 7.
[e] Psal. xvi. 2; Job xxii. 3. [f] Jer. ix. 24.

*person loved should receive the greatest good that can be?** Love also doth reconcile, conform, and unite the inclinations and affections of him who loves, to the inclinations and affections of him who is beloved; *eadem velle, et eadem nolle, to consent in liking and disliking of things*, if it be not the cause, if it be not the formal reason or essence, as some have made it, it is at least a certain effect of love. If, then, we truly love God, we shall desire that all his designs prosper, that his pleasure be fulfilled, that all duty be performed, all glory rendered to him: we shall be grieved at the wrong, the dishonour, the disappointment he receives: especially we shall endeavour in our own practice, with holy David, *to perform πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ all that God wills*,[g] desires, or delights in; to eschew whatever offends him. Our desire, our delight, our endeavour, will conspire with and be subordinate to his; for it would be a strange kind of love that were consistent with the voluntary doing of that which is hurtful, injurious, or offensive to that we love; such actions being the proper effects, the natural signs, of hatred and enmity: *If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar*, saith St. John; and, *If any man seeth his brother need, and shutteth his bowels toward him, how doth the love of God abide in him?*[h] He that in his affections is so unlike, so contrary unto God; he that is unwilling to comply with God's will in so reasonable a performance; he that, in a matter wherein God hath declared himself so much concerned, and so affected therewith, doth not care to cross him, to displease and disappoint him; how can he with any show of truth, or with any modesty, pretend to love God? Hence it is, that keeping of God's commandments is commonly represented to us as the most proper expression, as the surest argument of our love to God: *showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments;*[i] they are joined together as terms equivalent, or as inseparable companions in effect: *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: Ye are my friends* (that is, not only objects of my affection, but actively friends, bearing affection unto me) *if ye do whatsoever I command you*,[j] saith our Saviour: and, *Whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God truly perfected*:[k] (he hath the truth and sincerity; he hath the integrity and consummation of love: without it, love is wholly false and counterfeit, or very lame and imperfect; so the loving and beloved disciple teaches us.) For by doing thus, as we signify our esteem of God's wisdom which directeth us, our dread of his power and justice that can punish us, our hope in his goodness and fidelity to reward us, our regard to his majesty and authority over us; so especially thereby (if our obedience at least be free and cheerful) we express our good-will toward him; showing thereby, that we are disposed to do him all the good, and gratify him all we can; that his interests, his honour, his content, are dear and precious to us. And were indeed our *hearts knit unto God* with this bond of perfection, we could not in our wills, and consequently in our practice, be so severed from him;[l] we should also love heartily all virtue and goodness, the nearest resemblances of him, and which he chiefly loves; we should do what David so oft professes himself to do, *love his law, and greatly delight in his commandments*. With our Saviour, we should *delight to perform his will;* it would (as it was to him) *be our meat and our drink to do it; his yoke would be easy* indeed, *and his burden light* unto us: his yoke so easy, that we should wear it rather as a jewel about our necks than as a yoke; his burden so light, that we should not feel it as a burden, but esteem it our privilege.[m] We should not be so dull in apprehending, or so slack in performing duty; for this sharpsighted affection would presently discern, would readily suggest it to us; by the least intimation it would perceive what pleaseth God, and would snatch opportunity of doing it: we should not need any arguments to persuade us, nor any force to compel us;

* Quid est amare, nisi velle bonis aliquem affici quam maximis?—*Cic. de Fin.* 2.

[g] Acts xiii. 22. [h] 1 John iv. 20; iii. 17.

[i] Exod. xx. 6.

[j] John xiv. 21, 23; xv. 14.

[k] 1 John iv. 12.

[l] Psal. lxxxvi. 11; Col. iii. 14.

[m] Psal. xi. 7; cxix. 163, 165, 113, 16, 35, 70, 47, 24, 77; i. 2; cxii. 1; xl. 8; Heb. x. 7; John iv. 34; v. 30; Prov. iii. 22.

love would inspire us with sufficient vigour and alacrity; it would urge and stimulate us forward not only *to walk in*, but even, as the Psalmist expresseth it, to *run the ways of God's commandments*.[n]

But let thus much serve for explication of the nature of this duty; in order, as was before said, to the direction of our practice, and examination thereof: the particular duties mentioned being comprehended in, or appertaining to the love of God, if we perceive that we practise them, we may to our satisfaction and comfort infer, that proportionably we are endued with this grace; if not, we have reason (such as should beget remorse and pious sorrow in us) to suspect we abide in a state of disaffection or of indifferency toward him. If we find the former good disposition, we should strive to cherish and improve it; if the second bad one, we should (as we tender our own welfare and happiness, as we would avoid utter ruin and misery) endeavour to remove it.

II. To the effecting of which purposes, I shall next propound some means conducible; some in way of removing obstacles, others by immediately promoting the duty.

Of the first kind are these ensuing:—

1. The destroying of all loves opposite to the love of God, extinguishing all affection to things odious and offensive to God: mortifying all corrupt and perverse, all unrighteous and unholy desires.[o] It agrees with souls no less than with bodies, that they cannot at once move or tend contrary ways; upward and downward, backward and forward at one time: it is not possible we should together truly esteem, earnestly desire, bear sincere good-will to things in nature and inclination quite repugnant each to other. No man ever took him for his real friend, who maintains correspondency, secret or open, who joins in acts of hostility with his professed enemies: at least we cannot, as we ought, love God with our whole heart, if with any part thereof we affect his enemies; those which are mortally and irreconcileably so; as are all iniquity and impurity, all inordinate lusts both of flesh and spirit: *the carnal mind** (the minding or affecting of the flesh) *is* (St. Paul tells us) *enmity toward God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be*;[p] it is an enemy, even the worst of enemies, an incorrigibly obstinate rebel against God; and can we then, retaining any love to God or peace with him, comply and conspire therewith? And, *the friendship of the world* (that is, I suppose, of those corrupt principles, and those vicious customs which usually prevail in the world) *is also* (St. James tells us) *enmity with God*; so that, he adds, *if any man be a friend to the world*[q] *he is thereby constituted** (he immediately *ipso facto* becomes) *an enemy to God*. St. John affirms the same: *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*;[r] explaining himself, that by the world he means those things which are most generally embraced and practised therein: *the lust*, or desire, *of the flesh* (that is, sensuality and intemperance), *the lust of the eyes* (that is, envy, covetousness, vain curiosity, and the like), *the ostentation*, or boasting, *of life*† that is, pride, ambition, vain-glory, arrogance), qualities as irreconcileably opposite to the holy nature and will of God, so altogether inconsistent with the love of him; begetting in us an aversation and antipathy towards him; rendering his holiness distasteful to our affections, and his justice dreadful to our consciences; and himself consequently, his will, his law, his presence, hateful to us: while we take him to be our enemy and to hate us, we shall certainly in like manner stand affected toward him: this indeed is the main obstacle, the removal of which will much facilitate the introduction of divine love; it being a great step to reconciliation and friendship, to be disengaged from the adverse party: we should then easily discern the beauty of divine goodness and sanctity, when the mists of ignorance, of error, of corrupt prejudice, arising from those gross carnal affections, were dissipated; we should better relish the sweet and savoury graces of God, when the palate of our minds were purged from vicious tinctures; we should be more ready to hope for peace and favour in

[n] Psal. cxix. 32.
[o] Psal. xcvii. 10,—Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.
* τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός.
* καθίσταται.
† ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός, ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου.
[p] Rom. viii. 7.
[q] James iv. 4.
[r] 1 John ii. 15.

his eyes, when our consciences were freed from the sense of such provocations and defilements. But,

2. If we would obtain this excellent grace, we must restrain our affections toward all other things, however in their nature innocent and indifferent. The young gentleman* in the Gospel had, it seems, arrived to the former pitch; having through the course of his life abstained from grosser iniquities and impurities;[s] so far, that our Saviour, in regard to that attainment of his, conceived an affection for him† (he loved him, it is said,) yet was not he sufficiently disposed to love God; being *in one thing deficient*,[t] that he retained an immoderate affection to his wealth and worldly conveniences; with which sort of affections the love of God cannot consist: for we much undervalue God, and cannot therefore duly love him, if we deem any thing comparable to him, or considerable in worth or usefulness when he comes in competition; if we deem that the possession of any other thing beside him can confer to our happiness, or the want thereof can prejudice it, and make us miserable: no other love should bear any proportion to the love of him; no other object should appear (as indeed none really is) simply good, desirable, or amiable to us. What value St. Paul had of his legal qualifications and privileges, the same should we have concerning all other things in appearance pleasant or convenient to us;[u] they ought, in regard to God, to *seem damage and dung*;‡ not only mean and despicable, but even sordid and loathsome to us; not only unworthy of our regard and desire, but deserving our hatred and abhorrency; we should, I say, even hate the best of them; so our Saviour expresseth it: *If any man doth not hate his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters, and even his own soul* (or his own life), *he cannot be my disciple*;[v] that is, if any man retain in his heart any affection not infinitely, as it were, less than that which he bears to God; if any thing be in comparison dear and precious to him, he is not disposed to entertain the main point of Christ's discipline, the sincere and entire love of God. To *love him*, as he requires, *with all our heart*, implies, that our heart be filled with his love, so that no room be left for any other passion to enter or dwell there. And indeed such, if we observe it, is the nature of our soul, we can hardly together harbour earnest or serious affections toward different objects; one of them will prevail and predominate: and so doing, will not suffer the other to remain, but will extrude or extinguish it: no heart of man can correspond with two rivals, but, as our Saviour teacheth us, *it will hate and despise one, will love and stick to the other*; whence he infers, that *we cannot serve* (that is, affectionately adhere to) *both God and mammon*.[w] If we have according to the Psalmist's phrase, *set our hearts upon wealth*, and *will be rich* (are resolved to be, as St. Paul expresseth it;) if we eagerly aspire to power and honour, with the Pharisees, *preferring the applause of men before the favour of God*;[x] if any worldly or bodily pleasure, or any curiosity how plausible soever, hath seized upon our spirits and captivated our affections; if any inferior object whatever, with its apparent splendour, sweetness, goodliness, convenience, hath so inveighed our fancy, that we have an exceeding esteem thereof, and a greedy appetite thereto; that we enjoy it with huge content, and cannot part from it without much regret;[y] that thing doth at present take up God's place within us; so that our heart is uncapable, at least in due measure, of divine love: but if we be indifferently affected toward all such things, and are unconcerned in the presence or absence of them; esteeming them as they are, mean and vain, loving them as they deserve, as inferior and trivial; if, according to St. Paul's directions, *we use them as if we used them not*;[z] it is another good step toward the love of God: the divine light will shine more brightly into so calm and serene a medium: a soul void of other affections will not be only more capable to receive, but apt to suck in that heavenly one;

* ἄρχων. † ἠγάπησεν αὐτόν.
‡ ζημία, σκύβαλα.
[s] Matt. xix. 20; Mark x. 21.
[t] Luke xviii. 22. [u] Phil. iii. 8.
[v] Luke xiv. 26.
[w] Matt. vi. 24.
[x] Psal. lxii. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 17; John xii. 43. [y] 2 Tim. iv. 10. [z] 1 Cor. vii. 31.

being insensible, in any considerable degree, of all other comforts and complacences, we shall be apt to search after and reach out at that which alone can satisfy our understanding and satiate our desires; especially if we add hereto,

3. The freeing of our hearts also from immoderate affection to ourselves (I mean not from a sober desire or an earnest regard toour own true good; for this, as nature enforces to, so all reason allows, and even God's command obligeth us to; nor can it be excessive; but a high conceit of ourselves as worthy or able, a high confidence in any thing we have within us or about us;) for this is a very strong bar against the entrance, as of all other charity, so especially of this; for as the love of an external object doth thrust, as it were, our soul outwards towards it; so the love of ourselves detains it within, or draws it inwards; and consequently these inclinations crossing each other cannot both have effect, but one will subdue and destroy the other. If our mind be—*ipsa suis contenta bonis—satisfied with her own* (taking them for her own) endowments, abilities, or fancied perfections; if we imagine ourselves wise enough to perceive, good enough to choose, resolute enough to undertake, strong enough to achieve, constant enough to pursue, whatever is conducible to our real happiness and best content; we shall not care to go further; we will not be at the trouble to search abroad for that which, in our opinion, we can so readily find, so easily enjoy at home.* If we so admire and doat upon ourselves, we thereby put ourselves into God's stead, and usurp the throne due to him in our hearts; comparing ourselves to God, and in effect preferring ourselves before him; thereby consequently shutting out that unparalleled esteem, that predominant affection we owe to him; while we are busy in dressing and decking, in courting and worshipping, this idol of our fancy, we shall be estranged from the true object of our devotion; both we shall willingly neglect him, and he in just indignation will desert us. But if, as all other things, so even ourselves, do appear exceedingly vile and contemptible, foul and ugly, in comparison to God; if we *take ourselves* to be (as truly we are) mere *nothings*,[a] or somethings worse; not only destitute of all considerable perfections, but full of great defects; blind and fond in our conceits, crooked and perverse in our wills, infirm and unstable in all our powers; unable to discern, unwilling to embrace, backward to set upon, inconstant in prosecuting, those things which are truly good and advantageous to us; if we have, I say, this right opinion and judgment of ourselves, seeing withing us nothing lovely or desirable, no proper object there of our esteem or affection, no bottom to rest our mind upon, no ground of solid comfort at home, we shall then be apt to look abroad, to direct our eyes, and settle our affections upon somewhat more excellent in itself, or more beneficial to us, that seems better to deserve our regard, and more able to supply our defects. And if all other things about us appear alike deformed and deficient, unworthy our affection, and unable to satisfy our desires; then may we be disposed to seek, to find, to fasten and repose our soul upon the only proper object of our love; in whom we shall obtain all that we need, infallible wisdom to guide us, omnipotent strength to help us, infinite goodness for us to admire and enjoy.

These are the chief obstacles, the removing of which conduce to the begetting and increasing the love of God in us. A soul so cleansed from love to bad and filthy things, so emtied of affection to vain and unprofitable things, so open and dilated by excluding all conceit of, all confidence in itself, is a vessel proper for the divine love to be infused into: into so large and pure a vacuity (as finer substances are apt to flow of themselves into spaces void of grosser matter) that free and moveable Spirit of divine grace will be ready to succeed, and therein to disperse itself. As all other things in nature, the clogs being removed which hinder them, do presently tend with all their force to the place of their rest and well-being; so would, it seems, our souls, being loosed from baser affections obstructing them, willingly incline toward God, the natural centre, as it were, and bosom of their affection; would resume, as Origen speaks, that *natural philter* (that intrinsic spring, or incentive of love) *which*

* Τῳ γὰρ ὄντι δ ἐξ αὑτοῦ τις ἔχει περισσὸς, καὶ μάταιος παρ' ἄλλου λαμβάνων.—Epict. i. 9.

[a] Gal. vi. 3.

*all creatures have toward their Creator ;** especially if to these we add those positive instruments, which are more immediately and directly subservient to the production of this love; they are these :—

1. Attentive consideration of the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them.

2. The consideration of God's works and actions; his works and actions of nature, of providence, of grace.

3. Serious regard and reflection upon the peculiar benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed to ourselves.

4. An earnest resolution and endeavour to perform God's commandments, although upon inferior considerations of reason; upon hope, fear, desire to attain the benefits of obedience, to shun the mischiefs from sin.

5. Assiduous prayer to Almighty God, that he in mercy would please to bestow his love upon us, and by his grace to work it in us.

But I must forbear the prosecution of these things, rather than further trespass upon your patience. Let us conclude all with a good Collect, sometimes used by our Church :—

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee; grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTH. xxii. 37.—*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.*

Which is the great commandment? was the question in answer whereto our Saviour returns this text; and that with highest reason (discernible by every man), for that of necessity the love of God is the principal duty we owe unto him: the great duty indeed, as being largest in extent, and comprehending in a manner all other duties of piety; as that which exceeds in proper worth and dignity (employing the noblest faculties of our souls in their best operations upon the most excellent object), as that which communicates virtue unto, and hath a special influence upon, all other duties; in fine, as that which is the sum, the soul, the spring of all other duties: in discoursing whereupon, I did formerly propound this method :—first, to declare the nature thereof; then, to show some means apt to beget and improve that excellent virtue in us; lastly, to propose some inducements to the practice thereof.

The first part I endeavoured to perform, by describing it according to its essential properties (common to love in general, and more particularly to this), of duly esteeming God, of desiring, according as we are capable, to possess and enjoy him, of receiving delight and satisfaction in the enjoyment of him, of feeling displeasure in being deprived hereof, of bearing good-will unto him, expressed by endeavours to please him, by delighting in the advancement of his glory, by grieving when he is disserved or dishonoured.

The next part I also entered upon, and offered to consideration those means, which serve chiefly to remove the impediments of our love to God; which were—

1. The suppressing all affections opposite to this; all perverse and corrupt, all unrighteous and unholy desires.

2. The restraining or keeping within bounds of moderation our affections toward other things, even in their nature innocent or indifferent.

3. The freeing of our hearts from immoderate affection toward ourselves; from all conceit of, and confidence in, any qualities or abilities of our own; the diligent use of which means I did suppose would conduce much to the production and increase of divine love within us.

To them I shall now proceed to subjoin other instruments more immediately and directly subservient to the same purpose; whereof the first is—

1. Attentive consideration upon the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehension of

* Φίλτρον ἀναλαμβάνειν φυσικὸν τὸ πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα.—Orig. in Cels. p. 135.

them:* as counterfeit worth and beauty receive advantage by distance and darkness; so real excellency,—*si propius stes, te capiet magis*,—the greater light you view it in, the nearer you approach it, the more strictly you examine it, the more you will approve and like it: so the more we think of God, the better we know him, the fuller and clearer conceptions we have of him, the more we shall be apt to esteem and desire him; the more excellent in himself, the more beneficial to us he will appear. Hence is the knowledge of God represented in holy writ not only as a main instrument of religion, but as an essential character thereof;[a] as equivalent to the being well affected toward God: *O continue* (saith the Psalmist) *thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee;* that is, to all religious people. And, *This* (saith our Saviour) *is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;* knowledge of them implying all good affections toward them: as on the other side, ignorance of God denotes disaffection or want of affection toward God: *Now the sons of Eli* (it is said) *were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord:* and, *He that loveth not* (saith St. John) *doth not know God;*[b] the want of love to God is an evident sign, a natural effect of ignorance concerning him: indeed, considering the nature of our mind, and its ordinary method of operation, it seems impossible that such perfection discerned should not beget answerable reverence and affection thereto: if beautiful spectacles, harmonious sounds, fragrant odours, delicate savours, do necessarily and certainly please the respective senses; why should not with the like sure efficacy the proper objects of our mind affect it, if duly represented and conveyed thereto? If the wit of the most ingenious artists, the cunning of the deepest politicians, the wisdom of the sagest philosophers, are but mere blindness and stupidity in comparison to the wisdom of God; the lowest instance or expression of whose wisdom (his τὸ μωρὸν, *his folly*, as St. Paul speaks) *is wiser than men*,[c] doth excel the results of man's highest wisdom; yet them we admire and commend in men, why then do we not much more adore the divine wisdom? If the abilities of them who dexterously manage great business, or achieve prosperously great exploits, are indeed mere impotency in regard to God's power; *whose weakness* (that is, the smallest effects of whose power) is, as St. Paul again tells us, *stronger than men*, surpasses the utmost results of human endeavours; yet those things in men we extol and celebrate, how can we then forbear to reverence the divine power? If the dispensers of freest and largest bounty among men, the noblest patriots, the most munificent benefactors, the most tenderly affectionate friends, be in respect of God unworthy to be counted or called good (as our Saviour tells us, *If ye being bad, know how to give good things;* and, *There is none good but God;*[d] yet such persons are much beloved and applauded: how then can we abstain from paying the like measure of affection and respect to the divine goodness? If good qualities so inferior and defective obtain so much from us, whence comes it that the infinitely superior and most perfect excellences of God do not beget in their proportion a suitable regard and veneration in us toward him? whence, if not either from our not firmly believing them, or not rightly apprehending them, or not attentively considering them? Our belief of them in gross and at large, we may suppose as connected with the belief of God's existence, and included in the very notion of God; the defect, therefore, must proceed from the remaining causes, want of a right apprehension, or neglect of attentive consideration about them. As to the first of these: it is common for men to have confused, imperfect, and wrong conceptions about the divine attributes, especially in the recesses of their mind; which although they spare to utter with their mouths, yet they vent in their practice: if we, for instance, imagine that we can comprehend the extent of God's designs,

* Καθόλου μὲν ἡ τῶν παθῶν κακία διὰ τὴν περὶ θεοῦ ἀγνωσίαν, ἢ ἀδόκιμον γνῶσιν ἐγγίνεται.—Basil. de Jud. Dei. tom. ii. p. 261.

[a] 2 Pet. ii. 20.

[b] Psal. xxxvi. 10; ix. 10; Isa. v. 13; xi. 9; Hos. ii. 10; John xvii. 3; Jer. xxii. 16; xxiv. 7; xxxi 34; 2 Cor. x. 5; Isa. i. 3; Jer. xix. 3, 6; x. 25; 1 Thess. iv. 5; 1 Sam. ii. 12; 1 John iv. 8.

[c] 1 Cor. i. 25.

[d] Matt. vii. 11; Luke xi. 13; Matt. xix. 17.

or fathom the depth of his counsels; if we measure and model his reasons of proceeding according to our fancy) as *if his thoughts were as our thoughts, and his ways as our ways;*[e] or, as if he did *see as man sees;*) if we can *bless ourselves in following our own imaginations*, counsels, and devices, although repugnant to the resolutions of divine wisdom;[f] taking these not to benefit, or not to concern us, as we find many in the scripture reproved for doing; we greatly mistake and undervalue that glorious attribute of God, his wisdom; and no wonder then, if we do not upon account thereof duly reverence and love God: likewise if we, concerning the divine power, conceit that, notwithstanding it, we shall be able to accomplish our unlawful designs; that *we* may, as it is in Job, *harden our hearts against him, and prosper;* that we can anywise either withstand or evade his power (as also many are intimated to do, in scripture;[g] even generally all those who dare presumptuously to offend God), we also misconceive of that excellent attribute; and the contempt of God, rather than love of him, will thence arise. If, concerning the divine goodness and holiness, we imagine that God is disaffected toward his creatures (antecedently to all demerits, or bad qualifications in them), yea indifferent in affection toward them; inclinable to do them harm, or not propense to do them good; if we deem him apt to be harsh and rigorous in his proceedings, to exact performances unsuitable to the strength he hath given us, to impose burdens intolerable upon us; will not such thoughts be apt to breed in us toward God (as they would toward any other person so disposed) rather a servile dread (little different from downright hatred), or an hostile aversation, than a genuine reverence, or a kindly affection toward him?* If we fancy him, like to pettish man, apt to be displeased without cause, or beyond measure, for our doing somewhat innocent (neither bad in itself, nor prejudicial to public or private good), or for our omitting that, which no law, no good reason, plainly requires of us; what will such thoughts but sour our spirits toward him, make us fearful and suspicious of him; which sort of dispositions are inconsistent with true love? If, on the other side, we judge him fond and partial in his affections; or slack and easy, as it were, in his proceedings; apt to favour us although we neglect him; to indulge us in our sins, or connive at our miscarriages; will not such thoughts rather incline us in our hearts to slight him, and in our actions insolently to dally with him, than heartily and humbly to love him? If we conceit his favour procured, or his anger appeased by petty observances, perhaps without any good rule or reason affected by ourselves; when we neglect duties of greater worth and consequence, *the more weighty matters of the Law;* what is this, but instead of God to reverence an idol of our own fancy; to yield unto him (who is only pleased with holy dispositions of mind, with real effects or goodness) not duties of humble love, but acts of presumption and flattery? But if, contrariwise, we truly conceive of God's wisdom, that his counsels are always thoroughly good, and that we are concerned both in duty and interest to follow them, although exceeding the reach of our understanding, or contrary to the suggestions of our fancy; concerning his power, that it will certainly interpose itself to the hinderance of our bad projects, that it will be in vain to contest therewith, that we must submit unto, or shall be crushed by his hand; concerning his goodness, that as he is infinitely good and benign, so he is also perfectly holy and pure; as he wisheth us all good, and is ready to promote it, so he detesteth our sins, nor will suffer us to do himself, ourselves, and our neighbour any wrong; as most bountiful in dispensing his favours, so not prodigal of them, or apt to cast them away on such as little value them, and do not endeavour to answer them; as a faithful rewarder of all true virtue and piety, so a severe chastiser of all iniquity and profaneness; as full of mercy and pity toward them who are sensible of their unworthiness,

* Τόν γε θεὸν οὐ ῥητέον ἔχειν ἦθος τοιοῦτον, ὅγε τι αὐτὸς μισεῖ.—Plat. de Leg. x.

[e] Isa. lv. 8.

[f] 1 Sam. xvi. 7; Deut. xxix. 19; Psal. lxxxi. 12; cvii. 11; Isa. lxv. 2; liii. 6; Jer. xviii. 12; Hos. x. 12; viii. 12; Psal. lxxiii. 11; x. 11; xciv. 7.

[g] Job ix. 4; Isa. xlv. 9; x. 15; liv. 17; 1 Cor. x. 22; Deut. xxxii. 8; Dan. v. 23; Amos ix. 2; Isa. ii. 19; Jer. xvi. 16; Deut. xxviii. 29; Num. xiv. 41; 2 Chron. xiii. 12.

and penitent for their faults, so an implacable avenger of obstinate and incorrigible wickedness: in fine, as a true friend to us, if we be not wilful enemies to him, and desirous of our welfare, if we do not perversely render ourselves incpable thereof; so withal jealous of his own honour, resolute to maintain and vindicate his just authority, careful to uphold the interests of right and truth, and to show the distinction he makes between good and evil;[h] if we have, I say, such conceptions of God (agreeable to what his word and his doings represent him to us), how can we otherwise than bear a most high respect, a most great affection unto him? A prince, surely, endued with such qualities; wise and powerful, good and just together; tendering the good of his people, yet preserving the force of his laws; designing always what is best, and constantly pursuing his good intentions; tempering bounty and clemency with needful justice and severity; we should all commend and extol as worthy of most affectionate veneration: how much more, then, shall we be so affected toward him, in whom we apprehend all those excellences to concur without any imperfection or allay? especially if by attention we impress those conceptions upon our hearts; for how true and proper soever, if they be only slight and transient, they may not suffice to this intent; if they pass away as a flash, they will not be able to kindle in us any strong affection. But if such abstracted consideration of the divine perfections will not alone wholly avail, let us add hereto as a further help toward the production and increase of this divine grace in us.

2. The consideration of God's works and actions; his works of nature, his acts of providence, his works and acts of grace; the careful meditating upon these will be apt to breed, to nourish, to improve, and augment this affection. Even the contemplation of the lower works of nature, of this visible frame of things (upon which indeed many perspicuous characters of divine perfection, of immense power, of admirable wisdom, of abundant goodness, are engraven), hath in many minds excited a very high degree of reverence and good affection toward God: the devoutest persons (the holy Psalmist[i] particularly) we may observe frequent in this practice, inflaming their hearts with love, and elevating them in reverence toward God, by surveying the common works of God, by viewing and considering the magnificent vastness and variety, the goodly order and beauty, the constant duration and stability, of those things we see; in remarking the general bounty and munificence with which this great *Paterfamilias* hath provided for the necessary sustenance, for the convenience, for the defence, for the relief, for the delight and satisfaction of his creatures: even in the contemplation of these things being ravished with admiration and affection, how often do they thus exclaim: *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy! Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite: All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord:*[j] with such reflections, I say, upon those common, yet admirable and excellent works of God (which we perhaps with a regardless eye unprofitably pass over) did those good men kindle and foment pious affections toward God. The same effect may also the considering the very common proceedings of divine providence beget in us; such as are discernible to every attentive mind both from history and daily experience; considering God's admirable condescension in regarding and ordering human affairs both for common benefit, and for relief of particular necessities, his supplying the general needs of men, relieving the poor, succouring the weak and helpless, protecting and vindicating the oppressed, his seasonable encouraging and rewarding the good, restraining and chastising the bad: even such observations are productive of love to God in those who, according to that duty intimated by the prophet, *do regard the works of the Lord, and consider the operations of his hands; They who are wise, and will observe these things, they* (as the Psalmist tells) *shall understand the lov-*

[h] Isa. v. 4; Hab. i. 13; Psal. v. 4; xi. 5, &c.

[i] Psal. viii. xix. cxlv. civ. cxlvii.

[j] Psal. xxxiii. 5; cxix. 64; cxlv. 40; cxlvii. 4, &c.

ing-kindness of the Lord;[k] understand it practically, so as to be duly affected thereby; and so accordingly we find the consideration of these things applied by the great guides and patterns of our devotion. But especially the study and contemplation of those more high and rare proceedings of God, in managing his gracious design of our redemption from sin and misery, wherein a wisdom so unsearchable and a goodness so astonishing declare themselves, as are most proper and effectual means of begetting divine love: if the consideration of God's eternal care for our welfare, of his descending to the lowest condition for our sake, of his willingly undertaking and patiently undergoing all kinds of inconvenience, of disgrace, of bitter pain and sorrow for us; of his freely offering us mercy, and earnestly wooing us to receive it, even when offenders, when enemies, when rebels against him; of his bearing with exceeding patience all our neglects of him, all our injuries towards him; of his preparing a treasure of perfect and endless bliss, and using all means possible to bring us unto the possession thereof: if, I say, considering those wonderful strains of goodness will not affect us, what can do it? How miserably cold and damp must our affections be, if all those powerful rays (so full of heavenly light and heat) shining through our minds cannot inflame them? how desperately hard and tough must our hearts be, if such incentives cannot soften and melt them? Is it not an apathy more than stoical, more than stony, which can stand immoveable before so mighty inducements to passion? Is it not a horridly prodigious insensibility to think upon such expressions of kindness without feeling affection reciprocal? But if the consideration of God's general and public beneficence will not touch us sufficiently, let us farther hereto adjoin,

3. Serious reflections upon the peculiar (personal or private) benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed unto ourselves. There is, I suppose, scarce any man, who may not, if he be not very stupid and regardless, have observed, beside the common effects of God's universal care and bounty wherein he partakes, even some particular expressions and testimonies of divine favour dispensed unto him by God's hand (apt to convince him of God's especial providence, care, and good-will to him particularly, and thereby to draw him unto God), both in relation to his temporal and to his spiritual state; in preventing and preserving him from mischiefs imminent, in opportune relief, when he was pressed with want, or surprised by danger; in directing him to good, and diverting him from evil. Every man's experience, I say and suppose, will inform him that he hath received many such benefits from a hand, invisible indeed to sense, yet easily discernible, if he do attend to the circumstances wherein, to the seasons, when they come. It is natural to every man, being in distress from which he cannot by any present or visible means extricate himself, to stretch forth his hand and lift up his voice toward heaven, making his recourse to divine help; and it is as natural for God to regard the needs, to hearken to the cries, to satisfy the desires of such persons; for, *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him: he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing: He will be a refuge to the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble: He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness: They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing: Look at the generations of old, and see; did ever any trust in the Lord, and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise that called upon him? This poor man* (this, and that, any poor man) *cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles:*[l] since, then, no man in all likelihood hath not some occasion of God's especial favour and assistance, and God is always so ready to afford them, we may reasonably presume that every man doth sometime receive them, and is thereby obliged to return a grateful affection to him, not only as to a common benefactor, but as to his particular friend and patron. However, there is none of us who may not perceive himself singularly indebted to God's patience in forbearing to punish him, to his mercy in pardoning

[k] Isa. v. 12; Psal. xxviii. 5; cvii. 43; lxiv. 9; cxi. 2; lxxvii. 11; cxliii. 5.

[l] Psal. cxlv. 16, 18; cvii. 8; xxxiv. 6, 10; ix. 9; Eccles. ii. 10.

and passing over innumerable offences committed against him: the renowned penitent in the Gospel did *love much, because much was forgiven her*;[m] and who is there of us, that hath not the same reason to love much? who is there that, at least according to God's inclination and intention, hath not had much forgiven him? whom have not *the riches of divine goodness and long-suffering attended* upon *in order to his repentance*?[n] Who hath not been in so great degree ungrateful, unfruitful, and unprofitable, that he hath not abundant reason to acknowledge God's especial grace in bearing with him, and to confess with Jacob, that he is *less than the least of all God's mercies*?[o] If any such there were, he should have no less cause to be affected with the abundance of that grace, which so preserved him from sins and provocations. For if we stand, it is he that *upholdeth us*; if we fall, it is he that *raiseth us*;[p] it is his especial favour that either we avoid sin, or, sinning, escape punishment. Now then, God having by many real evidences declared such particular affection toward us, can we, considering thereon, do otherwise than say to ourselves, after St. John, *Nos ergo diligamus Deum, quoniam prior dilexit nos; Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us*:[q] surely in all ingenuity, according to all equity, we are bound to do so; the reason and nature of things doth require it of us: all other loves, even those of the baser sort, are able to propagate themselves (to continue and enlarge their kind), are commonly fruitful and effectual in producing their like;* how strangely then, unnatural and monstrous is it, that this love only, this so vigorous and perfect love, should be barren and impotent as it were? *If you love those that love you* (saith our Saviour) *what reward have you*?[r] (what reward can you pretend to for so common, so necessary a performance?) *do not even the publicans do the same*? (the publicans, men not usually of the best natures, or tenderest hearts, yet they do thus.) And, again, saith he, *If you love those who love you, what thank is it? for even sinners love those that love them*;[s] (sinners, men not led by conscience of duty, or regard to reason, but hurried with a kind of blind and violent force, by instinct of nature, do so much, go so far.) If thus men, both by nature and custom most untractable, the least guided by rules of right, of reason, of ingenuity, yea, not only the most barbarous men, but even the most savage beasts, are sensible of courtesies, return a kind of affection unto them who make much of them, and do them good; what temper are we of, if all that bounty we experience cannot move us; if God's daily *loading us with his benefits*, if his *crowning us with loving-kindness and tender mercies*, if all those *showers of blessings*,[t] which he continually poureth down upon our heads do not produce some good degree of correspondent affection in us? It cannot surely proceed altogether from a wretched baseness of disposition, that we are so cold and indifferent in our affection toward God, or are sometimes so averse from loving him; it must rather in great part come from our not observing carefully, not frequently calling to mind, not earnestly considering, what God hath done for us, how exceedingly we stand obliged to his goodness, from our following that untoward generation of men, who were not, it is said, *mindful of the wonders which God did among them; who remembered not his hand, nor the day that he delivered them*;[u] rather following, I say, such careless and *heartless people*[w] (so they are termed), than imitating that excellent person's discretion who constantly did *set God's loving kindness before his eyes*,[x] who frequently did thus raise his mind, and rouse up his affections: *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases*, &c.[y] It is not for the want of the like experience, or the like obligation, but for want of the same wisdom, of the same care, of the same honest consideration and diligence, that we do not the like.

* Ἐστι χάρις γὰρ τὴν χάριν τίκτουσ' ἀεί —Soph.

[m] Luke vii. 47. [n] Rom. ii. 4.
[o] Luke xvii. 10; Psal. cxxx. 3; Gen. xxxii. 10. [p] Ps. xxxvii. 23; cxlvi. 8.
[q] 1 John iv. 19. [r] Matt. v. 46.
[s] Luke vi. 32.
[t] Psal. lxviii. 19; ciii. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 26.
[u] Neh. ix. 17; Ps. lxxviii. 10, 42.
[w] Deut. v. 29; xxix. 4. [x] Psal. xxvi. 3.
[y] Psal. ciii.

To these means I add that,

4. A special help to breed in us this holy disposition of soul, will be the setting ourselves in good earnest, with a strong and constant resolution, to endeavour the performance of all our duty toward God, and keeping his commandments, although upon inferior considerations of reason, such as we are capable of applying to this purpose; regards of fear, of hope, of desire to avoid the mischiefs arising from sin, or attaining the benefits ensuing upon virtue. If we cannot immediately raise our hearts to that higher pitch of acting from that nobler principle of love, let us however apply that we can reach unto practice, striving as we are able to perform what God requires of us; exercising ourselves, as to material acts, in keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; the doing which, as it may in time discover the excellency of goodness to our mind, so it will by degrees reconcile our affections thereto; then, by God's blessing (who graciously regards the meanest endeavours toward good; who *despiseth not the day of small things;* who will *not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed*),[z] from doing good out of a sober regard to our own welfare, we shall come to like it in itself, and consequently to love him, unto whose nature, and to whose will, it renders us conformable: for as doing ill breeds a dislike to goodness, and an aversation form him who himself is full thereof, and who rigorously exacts it of us; as a bad conscience removes expectation of good from God, and begets a suspicion of evil from him, consequently stifling all kindness toward him; so, doing well, we shall become acquainted with it, and friends thereto; a hearty approbation, esteem, and good-liking thereof will ensue; finding by experience, that indeed the ways of wisdom, virtue, and piety, are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; that the fruits of conscientious practice are health to our body and to our soul, security to our estate and to our reputation, rest in our mind, and comfort in our conscience: goodness will become precious in our eyes, and he who commends it to us, being himself essential goodness, will appear most venerable and most amiable, we shall then become disposed to render him, what we perceive he best deserves, entire reverence and affection.

5. But I commend further, as a most necessary mean of attaining this disposition, assiduous earnest prayer unto God, that he would in mercy bestow it on us, and by his grace work it in us: which practice is indeed doubly conducible to this purpose; both in way of impetration, and by real efficacy: it will not fail to obtain it as a gift from God; it will help to produce it as an instrument of God's grace.

Upon the first account it is absolutely necessary; for it is from God's free representation of himself as lovely to our minds, and drawing our hearts unto him (although ordinarily in the use of the means already mentioned, or some like to them), that this affection is kindled; our bare consideration is too cold, our rational discourse too faint: we cannot sufficiently recollect our wandering thoughts, we cannot strongly enough impress those proper incentives of love upon our hearts (our hearts so damped with sensual desires, so clogged and pestered with earthly inclinations), so as to kindle in our souls this holy flame; it can only be effected by a light shining from God, by a fire coming from heaven: as all others, so more especially this queen of graces must proceed from the Father of lights, and Giver of all good gifts: he alone, who is love, can be the parent of so goodly an offspring, can beget this lively image of himself within us: it is the principal *fruit of God's holy spirit*,[a] nor can it grow from any other root than from it; it is called the *love of the spirit*, as its most signal and peculiar effect: in fine, *the love of God*, as St. Paul expressly teaches us, *is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us*;[b] given, but that not without asking, without seeking: a grace so excellent, God, we may be assured, will not dispense; a gift so precious he will not bestow on them who do not care to look after it, who will not vouchsafe to beg it: if we are not willing to acknowledge our want thereof; if we refuse to express our desire of it; if we will not show that we regard and value it; if, when God freely

[z] Isa. xlii. 1; Zech. iv. 10.

[a] Gal. v. 22. [b] Rom. xv. 30.

offers it, and invites us to receive it (he doth so by offering his Holy Spirit, the fountain thereof, unto us), we will not decently apply ourselves to him for it; how can we expect to obtain it? God hath propounded this condition (and it is surely no hard, no grievous condition), *if we ask we shall receive;* he hath expressly promised that *he will give his spirit* (his Spirit of love) *to them who ask it:* we may be therefore sure, performing the condition duly, to obtain it; and as sure, neglecting that, we deserve to go without.[c]

Prayer, then, is upon this account a needful means; and it is a very profitable one upon the score of its own immediate energy or virtue: for as by familiar converse (together with the delights and advantages attending thereon) other friendships are begot and nourished, so even by that acquaintance, as it were, with God, which devotion begets, by experience therein how sweet and good he is, this affection is produced and strengthened. As want of intercourse weakens and dissolves friendship,* so if we seldom come at God, or little converse with him, it is not only a sign, but will be a cause of estrangement and disaffection toward him: according to the nature of the thing, prayer hath peculiar advantages above other acts of piety, to this effect: therein not only as in contemplation the eye of our mind (our intellectual part) is directed toward God; but our affections also (the hand of our soul by which we embrace good, the feet thereof by which we pursue it) are drawn out and fixed upon him; we not only therein behold his excellences, but in a manner feel them and enjoy them; our hearts also being thereby softened and warmed by desire become more susceptive of love. We do in the performance of this duty approach nearer to God, and consequently God draws nearer to us (as St. James assures: *Draw near*, saith he, *unto God, and he will draw near to you*),[d] and thereby we partake more fully and strongly of his gracious influences; therein indeed he most freely communicates his grace, therein he makes us most sensible of his love to us, and thereby disposeth us to love him again. I add, that true (fervent and hearty) prayer doth include and suppose some acts of love, or some near tendencies thereto; whence, as every habit is corroborated by acts of its kind, so by this practice divine love will be confirmed and increased. These are the means which my meditation did suggest as conducing to the production and growth of this most excellent grace in our souls.

III. I should lastly propound some inducements apt to stir us up to the endeavour of procuring it, and to the exercise thereof, by representing to your consideration the blessed fruits and benefits (both by way of natural causality and reward) accruing from it; as also the woful consequences and mischiefs springing from the want thereof. How being endued with it perfects and advances our nature, rendering it in a manner and degree divine, by resemblance to God, (who is full thereof, so full that he is called love,) by approximation, adherence, and union, in a sort, unto him: how it ennobles us with the most glorious alliance possible, rendering us the friends and favourites of the sovereign King and Lord of all, brethren of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; enriches us with a right and title to the most inestimable treasures, (those which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him,*)[e] a sure possession of the supreme good, of all that God is able to bestow, all whose wisdom and power, whose counsel and care it eternally engageth for our benefit; how all security and welfare, all rest and peace, all joy and happiness, attend upon it; for that *the Lord preserveth all them that love him,*[f] (preserveth them in the enjoyment of all good, in safety from all danger and mischief,) and that *to those who love God, all things cooperate for their good:*[g] how incomparable a sweetness and delight accompanying the practice thereof, far surpassing all other pleasures; perfectly able to content our minds, to sustain and comfort us even in the want of all other satisfactions, yea, under the pressure of whatev-

*Πολλὰς μὲν φιλίας ἀποσηγορίη διέλυσε.

[c] Luke xi. 9, 13; Matt. xxi. 22; vii. 7; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; 2 Chron. xv. 2.

[d] James iv. 8.

[e] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

[f] Psal. cxlv. 20.

[g] Rom. viii. 28.

er most grievous afflictions can befall us. How contrariwise the want thereof will depress us into a state of greatest imperfection and baseness, setting us at the greatest distance from God in all respects, both in similitude of nature, and as to all favourable regard, or beneficial communication from him; casting us into a wretched and disgraceful consortship with the most degenerate creatures, the accursed fiends, who, for disaffection and enmity toward God, are banished from all happiness; how it extremely impoverisheth and beggareth us, divesting us of all right to any good thing, rendering us incapable of any portion, but that of utter darkness; how it excludeth us from any safety, any rest, any true comfort or joy, and exposeth us to all mischief and misery imaginable; all that being deprived of the divine protection, presence, and favour, being made objects of the divine anger, hatred, and severe justice, being abandoned to the malice of hell, being driven into utter darkness and eternal fire, doth import or can produce. I should also have commended this love to you by comparing it with other loves, and shewing how far in its nature, in its causes, in its properties, in its effects, it excelleth them; even so far as the object thereof in excellency doth transcend all other objects of our affection; how this is grounded upon the highest and surest reason; others upon accounts very low and mean, commonly upon fond humour and mistake: this produceth real, certain, immutable goods; others at best terminate only in goods apparent, unstable, and transitory: this is most worthy of us, employing all our faculties in their noblest manner of operation upon the best objects; others misbeseem us, so that in pursuing them we disgrace our understanding, misapply our desires, distemper our affections, mispend our endeavours. I should have enlarged upon these considerations, and should have adjoined some particular advantages of this grace: as, for instance, that the procuring thereof is the most sure, the most easy, the most compendious way of attaining all others; of sweetening and ingratiating all obedience to us; of making the hardest yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light unto us. In fine, I should have wished you to consider, that its practice is not only a mean and way to happiness, but our very formal happiness itself; the real enjoyment of the best good we are capable of; that in which alone heaven itself (the felicity of saints and angels) doth consist; which more than comprehends in itself all the benefits of highest dignity, richest plenty, and sweetest pleasure. But I shall forbear entering upon so ample and fruitful subjects of meditation, and conclude with that good Collect of our church:

O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XXV.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

MATTH. xxii. 39.—*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

The essential goodness of God, and his special benignity toward mankind, are to a considering mind divers ways very apparent; the frame of the world, and the natural course of things, do with a thousand voices loudly and clearly proclaim them to us; every sense doth yield us affidavit to that speech of the holy Psalmist, *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord*:[a] we see it in the glorious brightness of the skies, and in the pleasant verdure of the fields; we taste it in the various delicacies of food, supplied by land and sea; we smell it in the fragrances of herbs and flowers; we hear it in the natural music of the woods; we feel it in the comfortable warmth of heaven, and in the cheering freshness of the air; we continually do possess and enjoy it in the numberless accommodations of life, presented to us by the bountiful hand of nature.

Of the same goodness we may be well assured by that common providence which continually doth uphold us in our being, doth opportunely relieve our needs,

[a] Psal. xxxiii. 5; cxix. 64.

doth protect us in dangers, and rescue us from imminent mischiefs, doth comport with our infirmities and misdemeanours; the which, in the divine Psalmist's style, *doth hold our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved;* doth *redeem our life from destruction;* doth *crown us with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*[b]

The dispensations of grace, in the revelation of heavenly truth, in the overtures of mercy, in the succours of our weakness, in the proposal of glorious rewards, in all the methods and means conducing to our salvation, do afford most admirable proofs and pledges of the same immense benignity.

But in nothing is the divine goodness toward us more illustriously conspicuous, than in the nature and tendency of those laws which God hath been pleased, for the regulation of our lives, to prescribe unto us, all which do palpably evidence his serious desire and provident care of our welfare; so that, in imposing them, he plainly doth not so much exercise his sovereignty over us, as express his kindness toward us; neither do they more clearly declare his will, than demonstrate his good-will to us. And among all divine precepts this especially, contained in my text, doth argue the wonderful goodness of our heavenly Law-giver, appearing both in the manner of the proposal, and in the substance of it.

The second (saith our Lord) *is like to it;* that is, to the precept of *loving the Lord our God with all our heart:*[c] and is not this a mighty argument of immense goodness in God, that he doth in such a manner commend this duty to us, coupling it with our main duty toward him, and requiring us with like earnestness to love our neighbour as to love himself?

He is transcendently amiable for the excellency of his nature: he, by innumerable and inestimable benefits graciously conferred on us, hath deserved our utmost affection; so that naturally there can be no obligation bearing any proportion or considerable semblance to that of loving him: yet hath he in goodness been pleased to create one, and to endue it with that privilege; making the love of a man (whom we cannot value but for *his* gifts, to whom we can owe nothing but what properly we owe to *him*) no less obligatory, to declare it near as acceptable as the love of himself, to whom we owe all. To him, as the sole author and free donor of all our good, by just correspondence, all our mind and heart, all our strength and endeavour, are due: and reasonably might he engross them to himself, excluding all other beings from any share in them; so that we might be obliged only to fix our thoughts and set our affections on him, only to act directly for his honour and interest; saying with the holy Psalmist, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee:*[d] yet doth he freely please to impart a share of these performances on mankind; yet doth he charge us to place our affection on one another; to place it there, indeed, in a measure so large, that we can hardly imagine a greater; according to a rule, than which none can be devised more complete or certain.

O marvellous condescension! O goodness truly divine, which surpasseth the nature of things, which dispenseth with the highest right, and foregoeth the greatest interest that can be! Doth not God in a sort debase himself, that he might advance us? Doth he not appear to wave his own due, and neglect his own honour for our advantage? How otherwise could the love of man be capable of any resemblance to the love of God, and not stand at an infinite distance, or in an extreme disparity from it? How otherwise could we be obliged to affect or regard any thing beside the sovereign, the only goodness? How otherwise could there be any *second* or like to *that first, that great*, that peerless command, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?*[e]

This indeed is the highest commendation whereof any law is capable: for as to be like God, is the highest praise that can be given to a person; so to resemble the divinest law of love to God is the fairest character that can be assigned of a law: the which indeed representeth it to be *νόμος βασιλικὸς*, as St. James[f] calleth

[b] Psal. lxvi. 9; lvi. 13; ciii. 4; cxlv. 16.
[c] Luke x. 27.
[d] Psal. lxxiii. 25.
[e] Matt. xix. 17; xxii. 38.
[f] James ii. 8.

it; that is, a *royal* and sovereign law; exalted above all others, and bearing a sway on them. St. Paul telleth us, that *the end of the commandment* (or, the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) is *charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;* that charity *is the sum* and substance of all other duties, and that *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the* whole *law*, that charity is the chief of the theological virtues, and *the prime fruit of the divine Spirit;* and *the bond of perfection* which combineth and consummateth all other graces, and the general principle of all our doings.[g] St. Peter enjoineth us, that to all other virtues we *add charity*, as the top and crown of them; and, *Above all things* (saith he) *have fervent charity among yourselves.*[h] St. John calleth this law, in way of excellence, *the commandment of God:* and our Lord himself claimeth it as his peculiar precept; *This*, saith he, *is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you: A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another:* and maketh the observance of it the special cognizance of his followers; *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*[i]

These indeed are lofty commendations thereof, yet all of them may worthily veil to this; all of them seem verified in virtue of this, because God hath vouchsafed to place this command in so near adjacency to the first great law, conjoining the two tables; making charity contiguous, and, as it were, commensurate to piety.

It is true, that in many respects charity doth resemble piety; for it is the most genuine daughter of piety, thence in complexion, in features, in humour, much favouring its sweet mother: it doth consist in like dispositions and motions of soul; it doth grow from the same roots and principles of benignity, ingenuity, equity, gratitude, planted in our original constitution by the breath of God, and improved in our hearts by the divine *Spirit of love;*[j] it produceth the like fruits of beneficence toward others, and of comfort in ourselves; it in like manner doth assimilate us to God, rendering us conformable to his nature, followers of his practice, and partakers of his felicity:[k] it is of like use and consequence toward the regulation of our practice, and due management of our whole life: in such respects, I say, this law is like to the other; but it is however chiefly so for that God hath pleased to lay so great stress thereon as to make it the other half of our religion and duty; or because, as St. John saith, *This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also;*[l] which is to his praise a most pregnant demonstration of his immense goodness toward us.

But no less in the very substance of this duty will the benignity of him that prescribeth it shine forth, displaying itself in the rare beauty and sweetness of it; together with the vast benefit and utility, which it, being observed, will yield to mankind; which will appear by what we may discourse for pressing its observance. But first let us explain it, as it lieth before us expressed in the words of the text, wherein we shall consider two particulars observable: first, the object of the duty; secondly, the qualification annexed to it: the object of it, *our neighbour;* the qualification, *as ourselves.*

1. The object of charity is *our neighbour;* that is (it being understood, as the precept now concerneth us, according to our Lord's exposition, or according to his intent and the tenor of his doctrine), every man, with whom we have to do, or who is capable of our love, especially every Christian.

The Law, as it was given to God's ancient people, did openly regard only those among them who were linked together in a holy neighbourhood or society; from which all other men being excluded were deemed strangers and foreigners; (*aliens*, as St. Paul speaketh, *from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.*)[m] For thus the Law runneth in Leviticus: *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but*

[g] 1 Tim. i. 5; Rom. xiii. 8, 9; Gal. v. 14; 1 Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 22; Col. iii. 14; 1 Cor. xvi. 14. [h] 2 Pet. i. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 8.
[i] 1 John iii. 23, 11; iv. 21; John xv. 12; xiii. 34, 35.
[j] 1 John iv. 7, 11.
[k] Matt. v. 45; Eph. v. 1, 2.
[l] Matt. xxii. 40; 1 John iv. 21.
[m] Eph. ii. 12.

thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;[n] where plainly *Jews* and *neighbours* are terms equivalent; other men being supposed to stand at a distance without the fold or politic enclosure, which God by several ordinances had fenced, to keep that nation unmixt and separate:[o] nor can it be expected against this notion, that in the same chapter it is enjoined, *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;*[p] for by that stranger (as the Jewish masters will interpret it) is meant *a proselyte of righteousness;* or one who, although a stranger by birth, was yet a brother in religion, having voluntarily submitted to their law, being engaged in the same covenant, and thence admitted to the same privileges, as an adopted child of that holy family.

But now, such distinctions of men being voided, and that *wall of partition* demolished, all the world is become one people; subject to the laws of one common Lord;[q] and capable of the mercies purchased by our Redeemer. God's love to mankind did move him to send our Lord into the world, to assume human nature, and therein to become a mediator between God and men.[r] Our Lord's kindness to all his brethren disposed him to undertake their salvation, and to expiate their sins, and *to taste death for every man;* the effect whereof is an universal reconciliation of God to the world, and an union of men together.[s]

Now the blood of Christ hath cemented mankind; the favour of God, embracing all, hath approximated and combined all together; so that now every man is our brother—not only by nature, as derived from the same stock—but by grace, as partaker of the common redemption; now God *desiring the salvation of all men*, and inviting all men to mercy, our duty must be coextended with God's grace, and our charity must follow that of our Saviour.[t]

We are therefore now, to all men, that which one Jew was to another; yea, more than such, our Christianity having induced much higher obligations, stricter alliances, and stronger endearments, than were those whereby Judaism did engage its followers to mutual amity. The duties of common humanity (to which our natural frame and sense do incline us, which philosophy recommendeth, and natural religion doth prescribe, being grounded upon our community of nature and cognation of blood, upon apparent equity, upon general convenience and utility), our religion doth not only enforce and confirm, but enhance and improve; superadding higher instances and faster ties of spiritual relation, reaching in a sort to all men (as being in duty, in design, in remote capacity, our spiritual brethren;) but in especial manner to all Christians, who actually are fellow members of the same holy fraternity, contracted by spiritual regeneration from one heavenly seed, supported by a common faith and hope, strengthened by communion in acts of devotion and charity.[u]

Hereon, therefore, are grounded those evangelical commands, explicatory of this law as it now standeth in force; that *as we have opportunity we should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith;*[v] that we *should abound in love one towards another, and towards all men;* that we *should glorify God in our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, by liberally distributing to the saints, and to all men;* that we should *follow peace with all men;* should *be patient toward all men*, and *gentle toward all men*, and *show all meekness toward all men;*[w] and *ever follow that which is good, both among ourselves and to all men* that we should *make supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men*, especially for *all saints*, or all our fellow Christians; and *express moderation*, or ingenuity, *to all men.*[x]

Such is the object of our charity; and thus did our Lord himself expound it, when by a Jewish lawyer being put to resolve this question, *And who is my*

[n] Levit. xix. 18.
[o] Levit. xx. 26, 24; Exod. xxxiii. 16; Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2. [p] Levit. xix. 34.
[q] Eph. ii. 14; Gal. iii. 28; Acts x. 36.
[r] Tit. iii. 4; John iii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 5.
[s] 1 John ii. 2; Heb. ii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 19; Col. i. 20; Eph. i. 10; ii. 13.
[t] 1 Tim. ii. 4. Tit. ii. 11. Col. i. 23.
[u] 1 Pet. i. 23; ii. 17. [v] Gal. vi. 10.
[w] 1 Thes. iii. 12; 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.
[x] Heb. xii. 24; 1 Thes. v. 14; Tit. iii. 2; 1 Thes. v. 15. ἤπιον εἶναι πρὸς πάντας. 2 Tim. ii. 24; 1 Tim. ii. 1; Eph. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 5.

neighbour?[y] he did propound a case, or history, whereby he did extort from that Rabbi this confession, that even a Samaritan, discharging a notable office of humanity and mercy to a Jew, did thereby most truly approve himself a good neighbour to him; and consequently that reciprocal performances of such offices were due from a Jew to a Samaritan; whence it might appear, that this relation of neighbourhood is universal and unlimited.* So much for the object.

II. As for the qualification annexed and couched in those words, *as thyself;* that, as I conceive, may import both a rule declaring the nature, and a measure determining the quantity, of that love which is due from us to our neighbour; the comparative term *as* implying both conformity or similitude, and commensuration or quality.†

1. Loving our neighbour *as ourselves*, doth import a rule, directing what kind of love we should bear and exercise toward him; or informing us that our charity doth consist in having the same affections of soul, and in performing the same acts of beneficence toward him, as we are ready by inclination, as we are wont in practice, to have or to perform toward ourselves, with full approbation of our judgment and conscience, apprehending it just and reasonable so to do.

We cannot indeed better understand the nature of this duty, than by reflecting on the motions of our own heart, and observing the course of our demeanour toward ourselves; for thence infallibly we may be assured how we should stand affected, and how we should behave ourselves toward others.

This is a peculiar advantage of this rule (inferring the excellent wisdom and goodness of him who framed it), that by it very easily and certainly we may discern all the specialties of our duty, without looking abroad or having recourse to external instructions;‡ so that by it we may be perfect lawgivers, and skilful judges, and faithful monitors to ourselves of what in any case we should do: for every one by internal experience knoweth what it is to love himself, every one is conscious how he useth to treat himself; each one consequently can prescribe and decide for himself, what he ought to do toward his neighbour: so that we are not only *θεοδίδακτοι, taught of God*, as the Apostle saith, *to love one another;* but *αὐτοδίδακτοι*, taught of ourselves how to exercis that duty: whence our Lord otherwhere doth propose the law of charity in these terms *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets;*[z] that is, unto this rule all the special precepts of charity proposed in holy scripture may be reduced.

Wherefore, for information concerning our duty in each case and circumstance, we need only thus to consult and interrogate ourselves, hence forming resolutions concerning our practice.

Do we not much esteem and set by ourselves? Do we not strive to maintain in our minds a good opinion of ourselves? Can any mischances befalling us, any defects observable in us, any faults committed by us, induce us to slight or despise ourselves?—This may teach us what regard and value we should ever preserve for our neighbour.

Do we not sincerely and earnestly desire our own welfare and advantage in every kind? Do we not heartily wish good success to our own designs and undertakings? Are we unconcerned or coldly affected in any case touching our own safety, our estate, our credit, our satisfaction or pleasure? Do we not especially, if we rightly understand ourselves, desire the health and happiness of our souls?—This doth inform us what we should wish and covet for our neighbour.*

Have we not a sensible delight and complacency in our own prosperity? (Do we ever repine at any advantages accruing to our person or condition?) Are

* Πλησίον δὲ ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ ὁμοιοπαθὲς καὶ λογικὸν ζῶον, &c.—Just. Mart. contr. Tryph. p. 320.

† Ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς φιλίας τῇ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὁμοιοῦται.—Arist. Eth. ix. 4.

* Οὐ χρεία πολλῶν λόγων, οὐδὲ μακροτέρων νομων, οὐδὲ διδασκαλίας ποικίλης· τὸ θέλημά σου γινέσθω νόμος—σὺ γένου δικαστης, σὺ γένου νομοθέτης τῆς σεαυτοῦ ζωῆς.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιγ΄.

[y] Luke x. 29.

* Ὁ τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπῶν, ἅπερ αὐτῷ βούλεται ἀγαθὰ, ἀγαθὰ κἀκείνῳ βουλήσεται, &c.—Just. Mart. contr. Tryph. p. 321.

[z] 1 Thess. iv. 9; Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 31. Ὅ μισεῖς, μηδενὶ ποιήσῃς. Tob. iv. 15; Const. Apost. i. 1.

we not extremely glad to find ourselves thriving and flourishing in wealth, in reputation, in any accommodation or ornament of our state? Especially if we be sober and wise, doth not our spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue yield joyous satisfaction to us? Are we not much comforted in apprehending ourselves to proceed in a hopeful way toward everlasting felicity?—This may instruct us what content we should feel in our neighbour's prosperity, both temporal and spiritual.

Do we not seriously grieve at our own disasters and disappointments? Are we not in sad dumps, whenever we incur any damage or disgrace? Do not our diseases and pains sorely afflict us? Do we not pity and bemoan ourselves in any want, calamity, or distress? Can we especially, if we are ourselves, without grievous displeasure apprehend ourselves enslaved to sin and Satan, destitute of God's favour, exposed to endless misery?—Hence may we learn how we should condole and commiserate the misfortunes of our neighbour.

Do we not eagerly prosecute our own concerns? Do we not with huge vigour and industry strive to acquire all conveniences and comforts to ourselves, to rid ourselves of all wants and molestations? Is our solicitous care or painful endeavour ever wanting toward the support and succour of ourselves in any of our needs? Are we satisfied in merely wishing ourselves well? are we not also busy and active in procuring what we affect? Especially, if we are well advised, do we not effectually provide for the weal of our soul, and supply of our spiritual necessities; labouring to rescue ourselves from ignorance and error, from the tyranny of sin, from the torture of a bad conscience, from the danger of hell?—This showeth how ready we should be really to further our neighbour's good, ministering to him all kinds of assistance and relief suitable to his needs, both corporal and spiritual.

Are we so proud or nice, that we disdain to yield attendance or service needful for our own sustenance or convenience? do we not indeed gladly perform the meanest and most sordid offices for ourselves?—This declareth how condescensive we should be in helping our neighbour, how ready even *to wash his feet* when occasion doth require.

Do we love to vex ourselves, or cross our own humour? do we not rather seek by all means to please and gratify ourselves?—This may warn us how innocent and inoffensive, how compliant and complacent, we should be in our behaviour toward others; endeavouring *to please them in all things*, especially *for their good to edification.*[a]

Are we easily angry with ourselves, do we retain implacable grudges against ourselves, or do we execute upon ourselves mischievous revenge? are we not rather very meek and patient toward ourselves, mildly comporting with our own great weaknesses, our troublesome humours, our impertinences and follies; readily forgiving ourselves the most heinous offences, neglects, affronts, injuries, and outrages committed by us against our own interest, honour, and welfare?—Hence may we derive lessons of meekness and patience, to be exercised toward our neighbour, in bearing his infirmities and miscarriages, in remitting any wrongs or discourtesies received from him.

Are we apt to be rude in our deportment, harsh in our language, or rigorous in our dealing toward ourselves? do we not rather in word and deed treat ourselves very softly, very indulgently? Do we use to pry for faults, or to pick quarrels with ourselves, to carp at any thing said or done by us, rashly or upon slight grounds to charge blame on ourselves, to lay heavy censures on our actions, to make foul constructions of our words, to blazon our defects, or aggravate our failings? do we not rather connive at and conceal our blemishes? do we not excuse and extenuate our own crimes?

Can we find in our hearts to frame virulent invectives, or to dart bitter taunts and scoffs against ourselves; to murder our own credit by slander, to blast it by detraction, to maim it by reproach, to prostitute it to be deflowered by jeering and scurrilous abuse? are we not rather very jealous of our reputation, and studious to preserve it, as a precious ornament, a main fence, an useful instrument of our welfare?

[a] Rom. xv. 2.

Do we delight to report, or like to hear ill stories of ourselves? do we not rather endeavour all we can to stifle them; to tie the tongues and stop the ears of men against them?—Hence may we be acquainted how civil and courteous in our behaviour, how fair and ingenuous in our dealing, how candid and mild in our judgment or censure, we should be toward our neighbour; how very tender and careful we should be of anywise wronging or hurting his fame.

Thus reflecting on ourselves, and making our practice toward ourselves the pattern of our dealing with others, we shall not fail to discharge what is prescribed to us in this law: and so we have here a rule of charity. But further,

2. Loving our neighbour as ourselves doth also import the measure of our love toward him; that it should be commensurate and equal in degree to that love which we bear and exercise toward ourselves. St. Peter once and again doth exhort us *to love one another* ἐκτενῶς, *with an outstretched affection*:[b] and how far that affection should be stretched, we are here informed; even that it should reach the furthest that can be, or to a parity with that intense love which we do bear in heart, and express in performance, toward ourselves: so that we do either bring down our self-love to such a moderation, or raise up our charity to such a fervency, that both come to be adjusted in the same even level. This is that pitch at which we should aim and aspire; this is that perfection of charity, which our Lord recommendeth to us in that injunction, *Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*[c]

That this sense of the words is included, yea, chiefly intended, divers reasons will evince: For,

1. The most natural signification and common use of the phrase doth import thus much; and any one at first hearing would so understand the words.

2. It appeareth by comparing this precept with that to which it is annexed, *of loving God with all our heart and all our soul;* which manifestly designeth the quantity and degree of that love: consequently the like determination is intended in this precept, which is expressed to resemble that, or designed in like manner to qualify and bound our duty toward our neighbour.

3. If the law doth not signify thus much, it doth hardly signify any thing; not at least any thing of direction or use to us: for no man is ignorant that he is obliged to love his neighbour; but how far that love must extend, is the point wherein most of us do need to be resolved, and without satisfaction in which we shall hardly do any thing: for as he that oweth money will not pay except he can tell how much it is; so to know the duty will not avail toward effectual observance of it, if its measure be not fixed.

4. Indeed, the law otherwise understood will rather be apt to misguide than to direct us; inducing us to apprehend that we shall satisfy its intent, and sufficiently discharge our duty, by practising charity in any low degree or mean instance. Also,

5. The former sense, which is unquestionable, doth infer and establish this; because similitude of love, morally speaking, cannot consist with inequality thereof: for if in considerable degrees we love ourselves more than others, assuredly we shall fail both in exerting such internal acts of affection, and in performing such external offices of kindness toward them, as we do exert and perform in regard to ourselves; whence this law, taken merely as a rule, demanding a confused and imperfect similitude of practice, will have no clear obligation or certain efficacy.

6. But further to assure this exposition, I shall declare that the duty thus interpreted is agreeable to reason, and may justly be required of us, upon considerations which together will serve to press the observance of it according to such measure.

1. It is reasonable that we should thus love our neighbour as ourselves, because he is as ourselves, or really in all considerable respects the same with us: we concur with him in all that is necessary, substantial, and stable; we differ from him only in things contingent, circumstantial, and variable; in the which, of course or by chance, we are liable in a small time as much to differ from ourselves: in such respects we are not the same to-day that we were yesterday, and shall be to-morrow; for we shift our circumstances as we do our clothes; our

[b] 1 Pet. i. 22; iv. 8. [c] Matt. v. 48.

bodies are in continual flux, and our souls do much conform to their alteration; our temper and complexion do vary with our air, our diet, our conversation, our fortunes, our age; our parts grow and decay, our principles and judgments, our affection and desires, are never fixed, and seldom rest long in the same place; all our outward state doth easily change face: so that if we consider the same person in youth and in age, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in distress, may we not say, *quantum mutatus ab illo;* how quite another man is he grown! Yet shall a man for such alterations surcease or abate his love to himself?—Why, then, in regard to the like differences, shall we less affect our neighbour, who is endowed with that common nature, which alone through all those vicissitudes sticketh fast in us; who is the most express image of us (or rather a copy, drawn by the same hand, of the same original), another self, attired in a diverse garb of circumstances? Do we not, so far as we despise or disaffect him, by consequence slight or hate ourselves; seeing (except bare personality, or I know not what metaphysical identity) there is nothing in him different from what is, or what may be, in us?

2. It is just that we should love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because he really no less deserveth love, or because upon a fair judgment he will appear equally amiable. Justice is impartial, and regardeth things as they are in themselves, abstracting from their relation to this or that person; whence, if our neighbour seem worthy of affection no less than we, it demandeth that accordingly we should love him no less.

And what ground can there be of loving ourselves, which may not as well be found in others? Is it endowments of nature, is it accomplishments of knowledge, is it ornaments of virtue, is it accoutrements of fortune? But is not our neighbour possessed of the same? is he not at least capable of them, the collation and acquist of them depending on the same arbitrary bounty of God, or upon faculties and means commonly dispensed to all?[d] May not any man at least be as wise and as good as we?—Why then should we not esteem, why not affect him as much? Doth relation to us alter the case? is self as self lovely or valuable? doth that respect lend any worth or price to things?

Likewise, what more can justice find in our neighbour to obstruct or depress our love, than it may observe in ourselves? Hath he greater infirmities or defects, is he more liable to errors and miscarriages, is he guilty of worse faults than we? If without arrogance and vanity we cannot affirm this, then are we as unworthy of love as he can be; and refusing any degree thereof to him, we may as reasonably withdraw the same from ourselves.

3. It is fit that we should be obliged to love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because all charity beneath self-love is defective, and all self-love above charity is excessive.

It is an imperfect charity which doth not respect our neighbour according to his utmost merit and worth, which doth not heartily desire his good, which doth not earnestly promote his advantage in every kind, according to our ability and opportunity: and what beyond this can we do for ourselves?

If in kind or degree we transcend this, it is not virtuous love or true friendship to ourselves, but a vain fondness or perverse dotage; proceeding from inordinate dispositions of soul, grounded on foolish conceits, begetting foul qualities and practices; envy, strife, ambition, avarice, and the like.

4. Equity requireth that we should love our neighbour to this degree, because we are apt to claim the same measure of love from others. No mean respect or slight affection will satisfy us; we cannot brook the least disregard or coldness; to love us a little, is all one to us as not to love us at all: it is therefore equitable that we should be engaged to the same height of charity toward others; otherwise we should be allowed in our dealings to use double weights and measures, which is plain iniquity: what indeed can be more ridiculously absurd, than that we should pretend to receive that from others, which we are not disposed to yield to them upon the same ground and title?[e]

5. It is needful that so great a charity should be prescribed, because none in-

[d] 1 Cor. iv. 6, 7

[e] Prov. xx. 10.

ferior thereto will reach divers weighty ends designed in this law; namely, the general convenience and comfort of our lives in mutual society and intercourse: for if in considerable degree we do affect ourselves beyond others, we shall be continually bickering and clashing with them about points of interest and credit; scrambling with them for what may be had, and clambering to get over them in power and dignity: whence all the passions annoying our souls, and all the mischiefs disturbing our lives, must needs ensue.

6. That entire love which we owe to God our creator, and to Christ our Redeemer, doth exact from us no less a measure of charity than this: for seeing they have so clearly demonstrated themselves to bear an immense love to men, and have charged us therein to imitate them; it becometh us, in conformity, in duty, in gratitude to them, to bear the highest we can, that is, the same as we bear to ourselves: for how can we love God enough, or with all our soul, if we do not accord with him in loving his friends and relations, his servants, his children, with most entire affection?

If in God's judgments they are equal to us, if in his affection and care they have an equal share, if he in all his dealings is indifferent and impartial toward all; how can our judgment, our affection, our behaviour, be right, if they do not conspire with him in the same measures?

7. Indeed the whole tenor and genius of our religion do imply obligation to this pitch of charity, upon various accounts.

It representeth all worldly goods and matters of private interest as very inconsiderable and unworthy of our affection, thereby subtracting the fuel of immoderate self-love.

It enjoineth us for all our particular concerns entirely to rely upon providence; so barring solicitude for ourselves, and disposing an equal care for others.

It declareth every man so weak, so vile, so wretched, so guilty of sin and subject to misery (so for all good wholly indebted to the pure grace and mercy of God), that no man can have reason to dote on himself, or to prefer himself before others: we need not cark, or prog, or scrape for ourselves, being assured that God sufficiently careth for us.

In its account the fruits and recompenses of love to others in advantage to ourselves do far surpass all present interests and enjoyments: whence in effect the more or less we love others, answerably the more or less we love ourselves; so that charity and self-love become coincident, and both run together evenly in one channel.

It recommendeth to us the imitation of God's love and bounty; which are absolutely pure, without any regard, any capacity of benefit redounding to himself.[f]

It commandeth us heartily to love even our bitterest enemies and most cruel persecutors; which cannot be performed without a proportionable abatement of self-love.

It chargeth us not only freely to impart our substance, but willingly to expose our lives, for the good of our brethren:[g] in which case charity doth plainly match self-love; for what hath a man more dear or precious than his life to lay out for himself?

It representeth all men (considering their divine extraction, and being formed after God's image; their designation for eternal glory and happiness, their partaking of the common redemption by the undertakings and sufferings of Christ, their being objects of God's tender affection and care) so very considerable, that no regard beneath the highest will befit them.

It also declareth us so nearly allied to them, and so greatly concerned in their good (we being *all one in Christ*, and *members one of another*), that we ought to have a perfect complacency in their welfare, and a sympathy in their adversity, as our own.[h]

It condemneth self-love, self-pleasing, self-seeking, as great faults; which yet (even in the highest excess) do not seem absolutely bad; or otherwise culpable, than as including partiality, or detracting from that equal measure of charity which we owe to others: for surely we cannot love ourselves too much, if we love others equally with ourselves; we cannot seek our own good excessively,

[f] Matt. v. 45. [g] 1 John iii. 16.
[h] Gal. iii. 28; John xvii. 21; Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 26; John xiii. 35.
[i] 2 Tim. iii. 2; 2 Pet. ii. 10; Rom. xv. 1; Phil. ii. 4; 1 Cor. x. 24; xiii. 5.

if with the same earnestness we seek the good of others.

It exhibiteth supernatural aids of grace, and conferreth that holy spirit of love, which can serve to no meaner purposes, than to quell that sorry principle of niggardly selfishness, to which corrupt nature doth incline; and to enlarge our hearts to this divine extent of goodness.

8. Lastly, many conspicuous examples, proposed for direction in this kind of practice, do imply this degree of charity to be required of us.

It may be objected to our discourse, that the duty thus understood is unpracticable, nature violently swaying to those degrees of self-love which charity can nowise reach. This exception (would time permit) I should assoil, by showing how far, and by what means, we may attain to such a practice (how at least, by aiming at this top of perfection, we may ascend nearer and nearer thereto:) in the mean time, experience doth sufficiently evince possibility; and assuredly that may be done, which we see done before us. And so it is, pure charity hath been the root of such affections and such performances (recorded by indubitable testimony) toward others, which hardly any man can exceed in regard to himself: nor indeed hath there scarce ever appeared any heroical virtue or memorable piety, whereof charity overbearing selfishness, and sacrificing private interest to public benefit, hath not been a main ingredient. For instance, then,

Did not Abraham even prefer the good of others before his own, when he gladly did quit his country, patrimony, friends, and kindred, to pass his days in a wandering pilgrimage, upon no other encouragement than an overture of blessing on his posterity?

Did not the charity of Moses stretch thus far, when for the sake of his brethren he voluntarily did exchange the splendours and delights of a court for a condition of vagrancy and servility;[k] *choosing rather*, as the apostle speaketh, *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin?*[l] did not it overstrech, when although having been grievously affronted by them he wished that rather his name should be *expunged from God's book*, than that their sin should abide unpardoned?*

Did not Samuel exercise such a charity, when being ingratefully and injuriously dismounted from his authority, he did yet retain toward that people a zealous desire of their welfare, *not ceasing earnestly to pray for them?*[m]

Did not Jonathan love David equally with himself, when for his sake he chose to incur the displeasure of his father and his king:[n] when for his advantage he was content to forfeit the privilege of his birth, and the inheritance of a crown; when he could without envy or grudge look on the growing prosperity of his supplanter, could heartily wish his safety, could effectually protect it, could purchase it to him with his own great danger and trouble: when he, that in gallantry of courage and virtue did yield to none, was yet willing to become inferior to one born his subject, one raised from the dust, one *taken from a sheepcote;* so that unrepiningly and without disdain he could say, *Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee?*—are not these pregnant evidences, that it was truly said in the story, *The son of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul?*[o]

Did not the Psalmist competently practice this duty, when in the sickness of his ingrateful adversaries *he clothed himself with sackcloth, he humbled his soul with fasting; he bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother?*[p]

Were not Elias, Jeremy, and other prophets, as much concerned for the good of their countrymen as for their own, when they took such pains, when they ran such hazards, when they endured such hardships, not only for them, but from them; being requited with hatred and misusage for endeavouring to reclaim them from sin, and stop them from ruin?

May not the holy apostles seem to have loved mankind beyond themselves, when for its instruction and reformation, for reconciling it to God, and procuring its

[k] Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv. in Eph. Or. vii.
[l] Heb. xi. 24.

* Exod. xxxii. 32,—Βούλομαι μετ' ἐκείνων ἀπολέσθαι, ἢ χωρὶς ἐκείνων σώζεσθαι· ὄντως μανία, ὄντως ἔρως μέγας.—Chrys. in Eph. Or. vii.

[m] 1 Sam. xii. 23. [n] 1 Sam. xx. 30.
[o] Psal. lxxviii. 70; 1 Sam. xxiii. 17; xviii. 1; xx. 17. [p] Psal. xxxv. 12.

salvation, they gladly did undertake and undergo so many rough difficulties, so many formidable dangers, such irksome pains and troubles, such extreme wants and losses, such grievous ignominies and disgraces; slighting all concerns of their own, and relinquishing whatever was most dear to them (their safety, their liberty, their ease, their estate, their reputation, their pleasure, their very blood and breath) for the welfare of others; even of those who did spitefully malign and cruelly abuse them?

Survey but the life of one among them; mark the wearisome travels he underwent over all the earth, the solicitous cares which did possess his mind *for all the churches;* the continual toils and drudgeries sustained by him preaching by word and writing, in visiting, in admonishing, in all pastoral employments; the imprisonments, the stripes, the reproaches, the oppositions and persecutions of every kind, and from all sorts of people, which he suffered; the pinching wants, the desperate hazards, the lamentable distresses, with the which he did ever conflict:[q] peruse those black catalogues of his afflictions registered by himself; then tell me how much his charity was inferior to his self-love? Did not at least the one vie with the other, when he, for the benefit of his disciples, was content *to be absent from the Lord*,[r] or suspended from a certain fruition of glorious beatitude; resting in this uncomfortable state, in *this fleshly tabernacle*, wherein *he groaned, being burdened*,[s] and longing for enlargement? Did he not somewhat beyond himself love those men, for whose salvation he wished himself *accursed from Christ*, or debarred from the assured enjoyment of eternal felicity;[t] those very men by whom he had been stoned, had been scourged, had been often beaten to extremity, from whom he had received manifold indignities and outrages?

Did not they love their neigbours as themselves, who sold their possessions, and distributed the prices of them for relief of their indigent brethren?[u] Did not most of the ancient saints and fathers mount near the top of this duty, of whom it is by unquestionable records testified, that they did freely bestow all their private estate and substance on the poor, devoting themselves to the service of God and edification of his people? Finally,

Did not our Lord himself in our nature exemplify this duty, yea by his practice far outdo his precept? For, he who from the brightest glories, from the immense riches, from the ineffable joys and felicities of his celestial kingdom, did willingly stoop down to assume the garb of a servant, to be clothed with the infirmities of flesh, to become *a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief;* he who for our sake vouchsafed to live in extreme penury and disgrace, to feel hard want, sore travail, bitter persecution, most grievous shame and anguish; he who not only did contentedly bear, but purposely did choose to be accused, to be slandered, to be reviled, to be mocked, to be tortured, to pour forth his heart-blood upon a cross, for the sake of an unprofitable, an unworthy, an impious, an ingrateful generation; for the salvation of his open enemies, of base apostates, of perverse rebels, of villainous traitors;[v] he who, in the height of his mortal agonies, did sue for the pardon of his cruel murderers; who did send his apostles to them, did cause so many wonders to be done before them, did furnish all means requisite to convert and save them: he that acted and suffered all this, and more than can be expressed, with perfect frankness and good-will;[w] did he not signally love his neighbour as himself, to the utmost measure? did not in him virtue conquer nature, and charity triumph over self-love? This he did to seal and impress his doctrine; to show us what we should do, and what we can do by his grace; to oblige us and to encourage us unto a conformity with him in this respect; for, *Walk in love*, saith the apostle, *as Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us;* and, *This* (saith he himself) *is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you:*[x] and how can I better conclude, than in the recommendation of such an example?

[q] 2 Cor. xi. 23; iv. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 11.
[r] Phil. i. 24.
[s] 2 Cor. v. 1, &c.
[t] Rom. ix. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25; 1 Thess. ii. 15.
[u] Acts iv. 34
[v] Rom. v. 6, 8, 10; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Eph. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13; Chrys. in Eph. Or. vii. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.
[w] Heb. xii. 2.
[x] Eph. v. 1; 1 John iii. 16; John xv. 12; xiii. 34.

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.[y]

SERMON XXVI.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

MATTH. xxii. 39.—*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

I HAVE formerly discoursed on these words, and then showed how they do import two observable particulars: first a rule of our charity, or that it should be like in nature; then a measure of it, or that it should be equal in degree to the love which we do bear to ourselves. Of this latter interpretation I did assign divers reasons, urging the observance of the precept according to that notion: but one material point, scantiness of time would not allow me to consider; which is the removal of an exception, to which that interpretation is very liable, and which is apt to discourage from a serious application to the practice of this duty so expounded.

If, it may be said, the precept be thus understood, as to oblige us to love our neighbours equally with ourselves, it will prove unpracticable, such a charity being merely romantic and imaginary; for who doth, who can, love his neighbour in this degree? Nature powerfully doth resist, common sense plainly doth forbid, that we should do so: a natural instinct doth prompt us to love ourselves, and we are forcibly driven thereto by an unavoidable sense of pleasure and pain, resulting from the constitution of our body and soul, so that our own least good or evil are very sensible to us: whereas we have no such potent inclination to love others; we have no sense, or a very faint one, of what another doth enjoy or endure, doth not therefore nature plainly suggest, that our neighbour's good cannot be so considerable to us as our own? especially when charity doth clash with self-love, or when there is a competition between our neighbour's interest and our own, is it possible that we should not be partial to our own side? is not therefore this precept such as if we should be commanded to fly, or to do that which natural propension will certainly hinder?

In answer to this exception I say, first,

1. Be it so that we can never attain to love our neighbour altogether so much as ourselves, yet may it be reasonable that we should be enjoined to do so; for

Laws must not be depressed to our imperfection, nor rules bent to our obliquity: but we must ascend toward the perfection of them, and strive to conform our practice to their exactness. If what is prescribed be according to the reason of things just and fit, it is enough, although our practice will not reach it; for what remaineth may be supplied by repentance and humility in him that should obey, by mercy and pardon in him that doth command.

In the prescription of duty it is just, that what may be required, even in rigour, should be precisely determined, though in execution of justice or dispensation of recompense, consideration may be had of our weakness; whereby both the authority of our governor may be maintained, and his clemency glorified.

It is of great use, that by comparing the Law with our practice, and in the perfection of the one discerning the defect of the other, we may be humbled, may be sensible of our impotency, may thence be forced to seek the helps of grace, and the benefit of mercy.

Were the rule never so low, our practice would come beneath it; it is therefore expedient that it should be high, that at least we may rise higher in performance than otherwise we should do: for the higher we aim, the nearer we shall go to the due pitch; as he that aimeth at heaven, although he cannot reach it, will yet shoot higher than he that aimeth only at the housetop.

The height of duty doth prevent sloth and decay in virtue, keeping us in wholesome exercise and in continual improvement, while we be always climbing toward the top, and straining unto further attainment:[y] the sincere prosecution of which course, as it will be more profitable unto us, so it will be no less acceptable to

[y] 2 Thess. ii. 16.

[y] Phil. iii. 12.

God, than if we could thoroughly fulfil the law; for in judgment, God will only reckon upon the sincerity and earnestness of our endeavour: so that, if we have done our best, it will be taken as if we had done all. *Our labour will not be lost in the Lord;*[z] for the degrees of performance will be considered, and he that hath done his duty in part shall be proportionably recompensed; according to that of St. Paul, *Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own work.*[a] Hence sometimes we are enjoined to *be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*, and to be *holy as God is holy:* otherwhile to *go on to perfection*, and to *press toward the mark;*[b] which precepts in effect do import the same thing; but the latter implieth the former, although in attainment impossible, yet in attempt very profitable: and surely he is likely to write best, who proposeth to himself the fairest copy for his imitation.

In fine, if we do act what is possible, or as we can, do conform to the rule of duty, we may be sure that no impossibility of this, or of any other sublime law, can prejudice us.

I say, of any other law; for it is not only this law to which this exception may be made; but many others, perhaps every one evangelical law, are alike repugnant to corrupt nature, and seem to surmount our ability.

But neither is the performance of this task so impossible, or so desperately hard (if we take the right course, and use proper means toward it), as is supposed: as may somewhat appear, if we will weigh the following considerations:—

1. Be it considered, that we may be mistaken in our account, when we do look on the impossibility or difficulty of such a practice, as it appeareth at present, before we have seriously attempted, and in a good method, by due means, earnestly laboured to achieve it; for many things cannot be done at first, or with a small practice, which by degrees and a continued endeavour may be effected: divers things are placed at a distance; so that without passing through the interjacent way we cannot arrive at them; divers things seem hard before trial, which afterward prove very easy: it is impossible to fly up to the top of a steeple, but we may ascend thither by steps; we cannot get to Rome without crossing the seas, and travelling through France or Germany: it is hard to comprehend a subtile theorem in geometry, if we pitch on it first; but if we begin at the simple principles, and go forward through the intermediate propositions, we may easily attain a demonstration of it: it is hard to swim, to dance, to play on an instrument; but a little trial or a competent exercise will render those things easy to us: so may the practice of this duty seem impossible, or insuperably difficult, before we have employed divers means, and voided divers impediments; before we have inured our minds and affections to it; before we have tried our forces in some instances thereof, previous to others of a higher strain, and nearer the perfection of it.

If we would set ourselves to exercise charity in those instances, whereof we are at first capable without much reluctancy, and thence proceed toward others of a higher nature, we may find such improvement, and taste such content therein, that we may soon arise to incredible degrees thereof; and at length perhaps we may attain to such a pitch, that it will seem to us base and vain to consider our own good before that of others, in any sensible measure; and that nature which now so mightily doth contest in favour of ourselves, may in time give way to a better nature, born of custom, affecting the good of others. Let not, therefore, a present sense or experience raise in our minds a prejudice against the possibility or practicableness of this duty.

2. Let as consider, that in some respects, and in divers instances, it is very feasible to love our neighbour no less than ourselves.

We may love our neighbour truly and sincerely, *out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned*,[c] as St. Paul doth prescribe; or, according to St. Peter's injunction, *from a pure heart love one another fervently:*[d] and in this respect we can do no more toward ourselves; for truth admitteth no degrees,

[z] 1 Cor. v. 28; 1 Thess. i. 13; Heb. vi. 10.
[a] 1 Cor. iii. 8.
[b] Matt. v. 48; xix. 21; 1 Pet. i. 16; Col. iv. 12; Heb. vi. 1; Philip. iii. 14.

[c] 1 Tim. i. 6. [d] 1 Pet. i. 22; (Rom. xii 9.)

sincerity is a pure and complete thing, exclusive of all mixture or alloy.

And as to external acts at least, it is plain that charity towards others may reach self-love; for we may be as serious, as vigorous, as industrious in acting for our neighbour's good, as we can be in pursuing our own designs and interests: for reason easily can manage and govern external practice; and common experience showeth the matter to this extent practicable, seeing that often men do employ as much diligence on the concerns of others, as they can do on their own (being able to do no more than their best in either case:) wherefore in this respect charity may vie with selfishness; and practising thus far may be a step to mount higher.

Also rational consideration will enable us to perform some interior acts of charity in the highest degree; for if we do but (as without much difficulty we may do) apply our mind to weigh the qualities and the actions of our neighbour, we may thence obtain a true opinion and just esteem of him; and, secluding gross folly or flattery of ourselves, how can we in that respect or instance be more kind or benign to ourselves?

Is it not also within the compass of our ability to repress those passions of soul, the eruption whereof tendeth to the wrong, damage, and offence of our neighbour; in regard to which practice St. Paul affirmeth, that the law may be fulfilled: *Love* (saith he) *worketh no evil to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law?*[e] And what more in this respect can we perform for ourselves?

3. We may consider, that commonly we see men inclined by other principles to act as much or more for the sake of others, as they would for themselves.

Moral honesty hath inclined some, ambition and popularity have excited others, to encounter the greatest dangers, to attack the greatest difficulties, to expose their safety, to sacrifice their lives, for the welfare of their country.*

Common friendship hath often done as much, and brutish love (that *mad friendship*,* as Seneca calleth it) commonly doeth far more: for what will not a fond lover undertake and achieve for his minion, although she really be the worst enemy he can have? yet for such a snake will he not lavish his estate, prostitute his honour, abandon his ease, hazard his safety, shipwreck his conscience, forfeit his salvation?[f] What may not a Delilah obtain of her Samson, a Cleopatra of her Anthony, how prejudicial soever it be to his own interest and welfare?

Why, then, may not a principle of charity, grounded on so much better reason, and backed by so much stronger motives, be conceived able to engage men to the like practice? why may not a man be disposed to do that out of a hearty goodwill, which he can do out of vain conceit or vicious appetite? why shall other forces overbear nature, and the power of charity be unable to match it?

4. Let us consider, that those dispositions of soul which usually with so much violence do thwart the observance of this precept, are not ingredients of true self-love, by the which we are directed to regulate our charity; but a spurious brood of our folly and provity, which imply not a sober love of ourselves, but a corrupt fondness toward an idol of our fancy mistaken for ourselves.

A high conceit of our worth or ability, of our fortune or worldly state, of our works and achievements; a great complacence or confidence in some endowment or advantage belonging to us, a stiff adherence to our own will or humour, a greedy appetite to some particular interest or base pleasure; these are those, not attendants of natural self-love, but issues of unnatural depravedness in judgment and affections, which render our practice so exorbitant in this regard, making us seem to love ourselves so immoderately, so infinitely; so contracting our souls, and drawing them inwards, that we appear indisposed to love our neighbour in any considerable degree: if these (as by serious consideration they may be) were avoided, or much abated, it would not be found so grievous a matter to love our neighbour as ourselves; for that sober love remaining behind, to which nature inclineth, and which reason approv-

* Ἀληθὶς δὲ τὸ περὶ τοῦ σπουδαίου, καὶ τὸ τῶν φίλων ἕνεκα πολλὰ πράττειν καὶ τῆς πατρίδος, κἂν δέῃ ὑπεραποθνήσκειν.—Arist. Eth. ix. 8.

[e] Rom. xiii. 10.

* Insana amicitia.—*Sen.* Ep. ix.

[f] Chrys. in Eph. p. 797.

eth, would rather help to promote than yield any obstacle to our charity: if such perverse selfishness were checked and depressed, and natural kindness cherished and advanced, then true self-love and charity would compose themselves into near a just poise.

5. Indeed (which we may further consider) our nature is not so absolutely averse or indisposed to the practice of such charity, as to those may seem who view it slightly, either in some particular instances, or in ordinary practice: nature hath furnished us with strong instincts for the defence and sustenance of our life; and common practice is depraved by ill education and custom: these some men poring on, do imagine no room left for charity in the constitution of men; but they consider not that one of these may be so moderated, and the other so corrected, that charity may have a fair scope in men's hearts and practice; and they slip over divers pregnant marks of our natural inclination thereto.

Man having received his soul from the breath of God, and being framed after the image of his most benign parent, there do yet abide in him some features resembling God, and relics of the divine original; there are in us seeds of ingenuity, of equity, of pity, of benignity, which being cultivated by sober consideration and good use, under the conduct and aid of heavenly grace, will produce noble fruits of charity.

The frame of our nature so far disposeth us thereto, that our bowels are touched with sensible pain upon the view of any calamitous object: our fancy is disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling any person; we can hardly see or read a tragedy without motions of compassion.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency at first sight, without any discursive reflection, doth obtain approbation and applause from us; being no less grateful and amiable to the mind than beauty to our eyes, harmony to our ears, fragrancy to our smell, and sweetness to our palate: and to the same mental sense, malignity, cruelty, harshness, all kinds of uncharitable dealing, are very disgustful and loathsome.

There wanteth not any commendation to procure a respect for charity, nor any invective to breed abhorrence of uncharitableness; nature sufficiently prompting to favour the one, and to detest the other.*

The practice of the former in common language hath ever been styled humanity; and the disposition from whence it floweth is called good-nature: the practice of the latter is likewise termed inhumanity, and its source ill-nature; as thwarting the common notions and inclinations of mankind, divesting us of our manhood, and rendering us a sort of monsters among men.

No quality hath a clearer repute, or is commonly more admired, than generosity, which is a kind of natural charity, or hath a great spice thereof: no disposition is more despised among men than niggardly selfishness; whence commonly men are ashamed to avow self-interest as a principle of their actions (rather fathering them on some other cause), as being conscious to themselves that it is the basest of all principles.†

Whatever the censurers and detractors of human nature do pretend, yet even themselves do admire pure beneficence, and contemn selfishness; for, if we look to the bottom of their intent, it is hence they are bent to slander mankind as void of good nature, because out of malignity they would not allow it a quality so excellent and divine.

Wherefore, according to the general judgment and conscience of men (to omit other considerations,) our nature is not so averse from charity, or destitute of propensions thereto; and therefore cherishing the natural seeds of it, we may improve it to higher degrees.

6. But supposing the inclinations of nature, as it now standeth in its depraved and crazy state, do so mightily obstruct the practice of this duty in the degree specified, so that however we cannot by any force of reason or philosophy attain to desire so much, or relish so well, the good of others as our own; yet we must remember that a subsidiary power is by the divine mercy dispensed, able to control and subdue nature to a compliance,

* Ὅθεν τοὺς φιλανθρώπους ἐπαινοῦμεν.—Arist. Eth. viii. 1.

† Ἐπιτιμῶσι γὰρ τοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μάλιστα ἀγαπῶσι, καὶ ὡς ἐν αἰσχρῷ φιλαύτους ἀποκαλοῦσι.—Arist. ix 8.

Ὅσῳ ἂν βελτίων ᾖ, μᾶλλον διὰ τὸ καλὸν, καὶ φίλου ἕνεκα, τὸ δὲ αὑτοῦ παρίησι.—Ibid.

to raise our practice above our natural forces. We have alike averseness to other spiritual duties (to the loving God with all our hearts, to the mortifying our flesh and carnal desires, to the contempt of worldly things, and placing our happiness in spiritual goods;) yet we are able to perform them by the succour of grace, and in virtue of that omnipotency which St. Paul assumed to himself when he said, *I can do all things by Christ enabling me.*[g]

If we can get *the Spirit of love*,[h] (and assuredly we may get it, if we carefully will seek it, with constant fervency imploring it from him who hath promised to bestow it on those that ask it), it will infuse into our minds that light, whereby we shall discern the excellency of this duty, together with the folly and baseness of that selfishness which crosseth it; it will kindle in our hearts charitable affections, disposing us to wish all good to our neighbour, and to feel pleasure therein; it will render us *partakers of that divine nature*, which so will guide and urge us in due measure to affect the benefit of others, as now corrupt nature doth move us unmeasurably to covet our own; being supported and elevated by its virtue, we may, surmounting the clogs of fleshly sense and conceit, soar up to the due pitch of charity; being *θεοδίδακτοι, taught of God to love one another:* and endowed with *the fruits of the Spirit*, which are *love*, *gentleness*, *goodness*, *meekness;* and *created according to God in Christ Jesus*, to the practice of answerable *good works.*[i]

7. There are diverse means conducible to the abatement of difficulty in this practice which I shall propose, referring the matter to issue upon due trial of them.

1. Let us carefully weigh the value of those things which immoderate self-love doth affect in prejudice to charity, together with the worth of those which charity doth set in balance to them.

Aristotle himself doth observe, that the ground of culpable self-love, scraping, scrambling, scuffling for particular interest, is men's high esteem and passion for, and greedy appetite of wealth, of honours, of corporeal pleasures: whereas virtuous persons, not admiring those things, will constantly act for honesty sake, and out of love to their friends or country; wherein although they most really benefit and truly gratify themselves, yet are they not blamed for selfishness.*

And so indeed it is: if we rightly did apprehend the infinite vanity of all worldly goods, the meanness of private concerns, the true despicableness of all those honours, those profits, those delights, on which commonly men do so dote, we should not be so fond or jealous of them, as to scrape or scuffle for them, envying or grudging them to others; if we did conceive the transcendent worth of future rewards allotted to this and other virtues, the great considerableness of public good at which charity aimeth, the many advantages which may accrue to us from our neighbour's welfare (entertained with complacence, and wisely accommodated to our use), we should not be so averse from tendering his good as our own.

2. Let us consider our real state in the world, in dependence upon the pleasure and providence of Almighty God.

If we look upon ourselves as subsisting only by our own care and endeavour, without any other patronage or help, it may thence prove hard to regard the interests of others as comparable to our own; seeing, then, in order to our living with any convenience, it is necessary that we should be solicitous for our own preservation and sustenance, that will engage us to contend with others as competitors for the things we need, and uncapable otherwise to attain: but if (as we ought to do, and the true state of things requireth) we consider ourselves as subsisting under the protection, and by the providence of God, who no less careth for us than for others, and no less for others than for us (for, as the Wise Man saith, he *careth for all alike*;† who recommendeth to us a being mutually

[g] Phil. iv. 13, *ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντι.*

[h] 2 Tim. i. 7.

[i] 1 Thess. iv. 9; Gal. v. 22; Eph. v. 9; Col. iii. 12; Eph. iv. 24; ii. 10.

* Οἱ μὲν οὖν εἰς ὄνειδος ἄγοντες αὐτὸ, φιλαύτους καλοῦσι τοὺς ἑαυτοῖς ἀποδίδοντας τὸ πλεῖστον ἐν χρήμασι, καὶ τιμαῖς, καὶ ἡδοναῖς ταῖς σωματικαῖς· τούτων γὰρ οἱ πολλοὶ ὀρέγονται, καὶ σπουδάσασι περὶ αὐτὰ, ὡς ἄριστα ὄντα διὸ καὶ περιμάχητά ἐστιν· οἱ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα πλεονέκται χαρίζονται ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, καὶ ὅλως τοῖς πάθεσι, καὶ τῷ ἀλόγῳ τῆς ψυχῆς·—δικαίως δὴ τοῖς οὕτω φιλαύτοις ὀνειδίζεται.—Arist. Eth. ix. 8. Vid. tot.

† Ὁμοίως δὲ προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων.—Sap. vi. 7.

concerned each for other, and is engaged to keep us from suffering thereby; who commandeth us to disburden our cares upon himself; who assuredly will the better provide for us, as we do more further the good of others: if we do consider thus, it will deliver us from solicitude concerning our subsistence and personal accommodations, whence we may be free to regard the concerns of others, with no less application than we do regard our own.

As living under the same government and laws (being members of one commonwealth, one corporation, one family) disposeth men not only willingly but earnestly to serve the public interests, beyond any hopes of receiving thence any particular advantage answerable to their pain and care; so considering ourselves as members of the world, and of the church, under the governance and patronage of God, may disengage us from immoderate respect of private good, and incline us to promote the common welfare.

3. There is one plain way of rendering this duty possible, or perfectly reconciling charity to self-love; which is, a making the welfare of our neighbour to be our own: which if we can do, then easily may we desire it more seriously, then may we promote it with the greatest zeal and vigour: for then it will be an instance of self-love to exercise charity; then both these inclinations conspiring will march evenly together, one will not extrude nor depress the other.

It may be hard, while our concerns appear divided, not to prefer our own; but when they are coincident or conspire together, the ground of that partiality is removed.

Nor is this an imaginary course, but grounded in reason, and thereby reducible to practice: for considering the manifold bands of relation (natural, civil, or spiritual) between men, as naturally of the same kind and blood, as civilly members of the same society, as spiritually linked in one brotherhood; considering the mutual advantages derivable from the wealth and welfare of each other (in way of needful succour, advice, and comfort, of profitable commerce, of pleasant conversation;) considering the mischiefs which from our neighbour's indigency and affliction we may incur, they rendering him as a wild beast, unsociable, troublesome, and formidable to us; considering that we cannot be happy without good nature and good humour, and that good nature cannot behold any sad object without pity and dolorous resentment, good humour cannot subsist in prospect of such objects; considering that charity is an instrument, whereby we may apply all our neighbour's good to ourselves, it being ours, if we can find complacence therein; it may appear reasonable to reckon all our neighbour's concerns to our account.

That this is practicable, experience may confirm; for we may observe, that men commonly do thus appropriate the concerns of others, resenting the disasters of a friend or of a relation with as sensible displeasure as they could their own; and answerably finding as high a satisfaction in their good fortune. Yea, many persons do feel more pain by compassion for others, than they could do in sustaining the same evils; divers can with a stout heart undergo their own afflictions, who are melted with those of a friend or brother. Seeing, then, in true judgment, humanity doth match any other relation, and Christianity far doth exceed all other alliances, why may we not on them ground the like affections and practices, if reason hath any force, or consideration can anywise sway in our practice?

4. It will greatly conduce to the perfect observance of this rule, to the depression of self-love, and advancement of charity to the highest pitch, if we do studiously contemplate ourselves, strictly examining our conscience, and seriously reflecting on our unworthiness and vileness; the infirmities and defects of nature, the corruptions and defilements of our soul, the sins and miscarriages of our lives: which doing, we shall certainly be far from admiring or doting on ourselves; but rather, as Job did, we shall *condemn* and *abhor ourselves*:[1] when we see ourselves so deformed and ugly, how can we be amiable in our own eyes? how can we more esteem or affect ourselves than others, of whose unworthiness we can hardly be so conscious or sure? What place can there be for that vanity and folly, for that pride and arro-

[1] Job ix. 20; xlii. 6.

gance, for that partiality and injustice, which are the sources of immoderate self-love?

5. And lastly, we may from many conspicuous experiments and examples be assured that such a practice of this duty is not impossible; but these I have already produced and urged in the precedent discourse, and shall not repeat them again.

SERMON XXVII.

THE NATURE, PROPERTIES, AND ACTS OF CHARITY.

EPHES. v. 2.—*And walk in love.*

ST. Paul telleth us, that *the end of the commandment* (or the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) *is charity, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;*[a] that charity is a general principle of all good practice (*let all your things be done in charity;*) that is the sum and abridgment of all other duties, so that he *that loveth another, hath fulfilled the whole law;* that it is *the chief* of the theological virtues; the *prime fruit of the divine Spirit*, and *the band of perfection*, which combineth and consummateth all other graces.[b]

St. Peter enjoineth us, that to all other virtues we should add charity, as the top and crown of them; and, *Above all things* (saith he) *have fervent charity among yourselves.*[d]

St. James styleth the law of charity, *νόμον βασιλικὸν, the royal*, or sovereign *law.*[e]

St. John calleth it, in way of excellence, *the commandment of God; This is his commandment, that we should love one another.*[f]

Our Lord claimeth it for his peculiar law: *This is my commandment;* and, *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.* And he maketh the observance of it the special badge and cognizance of his followers: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*[g]

[a] 1 Tim. i. 5.
[b] 1 Cor. xvi. 14; Gal. v. 14; Rom. xiii. 8, 9.
[c] 1 Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 22; Col. iii. 14.
[d] 2 Pet. i. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 8. [e] James ii. 8.
[f] 1 John iii. 23, 11; iv. 21.
[g] John xv. 12; xiii. 34, 35.

It being therefore a duty of so grand importance, it is most requisite that we should well understand it, and faithfully observe it; to which purposes I shall, by God's assistance, endeavour to confer somewhat, first by explaining its nature, then by pressing the observance of it by several inducements.

The nature of it will, as I conceive, be best understood by representing the several chief acts, which it compriseth or implieth as necessary pre-requisites, or essential ingredients, or inseparable adherents to it; some internally resident in the soul, others discharged in external performance; together with some special properties of it. And such are those which follow:—

I. *Loving our neighbour* doth imply, that we should value and esteem him: this is necessary, for affection doth follow opinion; so that we cannot like any thing which we do not esteem, or wherein we do not apprehend some considerable good, attractive of affection; that is not amiable, which is wholly contemptible; or so far as it is such.

But in right judgment no man is such; for the Wise Man telleth us, that *he that despiseth his neighbour, sinneth;* and, *He is void of understanding that despiseth his neighbour;* but no man is guilty of sin or folly for despising that which is wholly despicable.

It is indeed true, that every man is subject to defects and to mischances, apt to breed contempt, especially in the minds of vulgar and weak people; but no man is really despicable. For,

Every man living hath stamped on him the venerable image of his glorious Maker, which nothing incident to him can utterly deface.

Every man is of a divine extraction, and allied to Heaven by nature and by grace; as the son of God, and brother of God incarnate: *If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*[i]

[h] Prov. xiv. 21; xi. 12.
[i] Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15; xxxii. 8.

Every man is endued with that celestial faculty of reason, *inspired by the Almighty*, (for, *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*), and hath an immortal spirit residing in him; or rather is himself an angelical spirit dwelling in a visible tabernacle.

Every man was originally designed and framed for a fruition of eternal happiness.

Every man hath an interest in the common redemption, purchased by the blood of the Son of God, who *tasted death for every one.*

Every man is capable of sovereign bliss, and hath a crown of endless glory offered to him.

In fine, every man, and all men alike, antecedently to their own will and choice, are the objects of his love, of his care, of his mercy; who is *loving unto every man, and whose mercy is over all his works;* who *hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike;* who *is rich*, in bounty and mercy, *toward all that call upon him.*[j]

How then can any man be deemed contemptible, having so noble relations, capacities, and privileges? How a man standeth in esteem with God, Elihu telleth us: *God* (saith he) *is mighty, and despiseth not any.*[k] Although he be so mighty, so excellent in perfection, so infinitely in state exalted above all, yet doth not he slight any; and how can we contemn those, whom the certain voucher and infallible judge of worth deigneth to value? Indeed, God so valued every man as to take great care, to be at great cost and trouble, to stoop down from heaven, to assume mortal flesh, to endure pinching wants and sore distresses, to *taste death for every one.*

We may ask with St. Paul, *Why dost thou set at nought thy brother?*[l]

Is it for the lowness of his condition, or for any misfortune that hath befallen him? But are not the best men, are not all men, art not thou thyself, obnoxious to the like?[m] Hath not God declared that he hath a special regard to such? and are not such things commonly disposed by his hand with a gracious intent?

Is it for meanness of parts, or abilities, or endowments? But are not these the gifts of God, absolutely at his disposal, and arbitrarily distributed or preserved; so that thou who art so wise in thy own conceit to-day, mayest, by a disease, or from a judgment, deserved by thy pride, become an idiot to-morrow? Have not many good, and therefore many happy men, wanted those things?[n]

Is it for moral imperfections or blemishes; for vicious habits, or actual misdemeanours? These indeed are the only debasements and disparagements of a man; yet do they not expunge the characters of divinity impressed on his nature; and he may by God's mercy recover from them. And are we not ourselves, if grace do not uphold us, liable to the same? Yea, may we not, if without partiality or flattery we examine ourselves, discern the same within us, or other defects equivalent? And, however, is not pity rather due to them than contempt? Whose character was it, that *they trusted they were righteous, and despised others?*[o] That the most palpable offender should not be quite despised, God had a special care in his Law, for that end moderating punishment, and restraining the number of stripes: *If* (saith the Law) *the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.*[p]

We may consider that the common things, both good and bad, wherein men agree, are far more considerable than the peculiar things wherein they differ: to be a man, is much beyond being a lord, or a wit, or a philosopher; to be a Christian, doth infinitely surpass being an emperor, or a learned clerk; to be a sinner, is much worse than to be a beggar, or an idiot. The agreement of men is in the substance and body of things; the difference is in a circumstance, a fringe, or a

[j] Psal. cxlv. 9; Job xxxiv. 19; Wisd. vi. 8; Rom. x. 12; iii. 22.
[k] Job xxxvi. 5; Psal. lxix. 33.
[l] Rom. xiv. 10.
[m] James ii. 5; Psal. xxxvii. 33; cxlvi. 9.
[n] 1 Cor. i. 26.
[o] Luke xviii. 9; xvi. 15.
[p] Deut. xxv. 2, 3.

shadow about them; so that we cannot despise another man, without reflecting contempt on ourselves, who are so very like him, and not considerably better than he, or hardly can without arrogance pretend to be so.

We may, therefore, and reason doth require, that we should value our neighbour; and it is no impossible or unreasonable precept which St. Peter giveth us, to *honour all men*;[q] and with it a charitable mind will easily comply: it ever will descry something valuable, something honourable, something amiable in our neighbour; it will find somewhat of dignity in the meanest, somewhat of worth in the basest, somewhat hopeful in the most degenerate of men; it therefore will not absolutely slight or scorn any man whatever, looking on him as an abject or forlorn wretch, unworthy of consideration.[r]

It is indeed a point of charity to see more things estimable in others than in ourselves; or to be apprehensive of more defects meriting disesteem in ourselves than in others; and consequently in our opinion to prefer others before us, according to those apostolical precepts, *Be kindly affected one toward another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Be subject one to another.*[s]

II. Loving our neighbour doth imply a sincere and earnest desire of his welfare, and good of all kinds, in due proportion: for it is a property of love, that it would have its object most worthy of itself, and consequently that it should attain the best state whereof it is capable, and persist firm therein; to be fair and plump, to flourish and thrive without diminution or decay; this is plain to experience in respect to any other thing (a horse, a flower, a building, or any such thing) which we pretend to love; wherefore charity should dispose us to be thus affected to our neighbour; so that we do not look upon his condition or affairs with an indifferent eye or cold heart, but are much concerned for him, and put forth hearty wishes for his interests: we should wish him adorned with all virtue, and accomplished with all worthy endowments of soul; we should wish him prosperous success in all his designs, and a comfortable satisfaction of his desires; we should wish him with alacrity of mind to reap the fruits of his industry, and to enjoy the best accommodations of his life. Not formally and in compliment, as the mode is, but really and with a cordial sense, upon his undertaking any enterprise, we should wish him good speed; upon any prosperous success of his endeavours, we should bid him joy; wherever he is going, whatever he is doing, we should wish him peace and the presence of God with him; we should tender his health, his safety, his quiet, his reputation, his wealth, his prosperity, in all respects; but especially with peculiar ardency we should desire his final welfare, and the happiness of his soul, that being incomparably his chief concern.

Hence readily should we pour forth our prayers, which are the truest expressions of good desire, for the welfare of our neighbour, to him who is able to work and bestow it.

Such was the charity of St. Paul for his countrymen, signified in those words: *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved;* such was his love to the Philippians, *God is my record, how greatly I long after you all* in the bowels of Jesus Christ: and this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.*[u]

Such was St. John's charity to his friend Gaius, to whom he said, *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*[v]

Such is the charity which we are enjoined to express toward all men, by *praying for all men*, in conformity to the charity of God who *will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*[w]

Such is the charity we are commanded to use toward our enemies, *blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who despitefully use us, and persecute us;*[x] the which was exemplified by our

[q] 1 Pet. ii. 17. [r] 1 Cor. xiii. 7.
[s] Rom. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 3; 1 Pet. v. 5.

* ἐπιποθῶ ὑμᾶς.
[t] Rom. x. 1. [u] Phil. i. 8; 2 Cor. xiii. 9.
[v] 3 John 2. [w] 1 Tim. ii. 3.
[x] Matt. v. 44; Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. iv. 12.

Lord, by St. Stephen, by all the holy apostles.

III. Charity doth imply a complacence or delightful satisfaction in the good of our neighbour; this is consequent on the former property, for that joy naturally doth result from events agreeable to our desire: charity hath a good eye, which is not offended or dazzled with the lustre of its neighbour's virtue, or with the splendour of his fortune, but vieweth either of them steadily with pleasure, as a very delightful spectacle; it beholdeth him to prosper and flourish, to grow in wealth and repute, not only without envious repining, but with gladsome content: its property is *to rejoice with them that rejoice*;[z] to partake of their enjoyments, to feast in their pleasures, to triumph in their success.

As one member doth feel the health and the delight which another immediately doth enjoy;[a] so hath a charitable man a sensible complacence in the welfare and joy of his neighbour.

His prosperity of any kind, in proportion to its importance, doth please him; but especially his spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue doth yield matter of content; and his good deeds he beholdeth with abundant satisfaction.

This is that instance of charity which St. Paul so frequently doth express in his epistles, declaring the extreme joy he did feel in the faith, in the virtue, in the orderly conversation of those brethren, to whom he writeth.

This charity possessed St. John, when he said, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*[b]

This is the charity of heaven, which doth even cheer the angels, and doth enhance the bliss of the blessed spirits there; of whom it is said, *There is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth.*[c] Hence this is the disposition of charitable persons, sincerely to congratulate any good occurrence to their neighbour; they are ready to conspire in rendering thanks and praise to the Author of their welfare, taking the good conferred on their neighbour as a blessing and obligation on themselves; so that they upon such occasions are apt to say with St. Paul, *What thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God?* and, *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and that the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth:* and, *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him.*[d]

It is a precept of St. Paul, *Give thanks always ὑπὲρ πάντων;* which is translated *for all things*, but it might as well be rendered *for all persons*, according to that injunction, *I exhort, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men:*[e] not only prayers are to be made, but thanksgivings are to be offered for all men out of general charity.

IV. Correspondently, love of our neighbour doth imply condolency and commiseration of the evils befalling him: for what we love, we cannot without displeasure behold lying in a bad condition, sinking into decay, or in danger to perish; so, to a charitable mind, the bad state of any man is a most unpleasant and painful sight.

It is the property of charity to *mourn*[f] *with those that mourn;* not coldly, but passionately (for it is *to weep with those that weep*), resenting every man's case with an affection suitable thereto, and as he doth himself resent it.

Is any man fallen into disgrace? charity doth hold down its head, is abashed and out of countenance, partaking of his shame: is any man disappointed of his hopes or endeavours? charity crieth out *alas!* as if it were itself defeated: is any man afflicted with pain or sickness? charity looketh sadly, it sigheth and groaneth, it fainteth and languisheth with him: is any man pinched with hard want? charity, if it cannot succour, it will condole? doth ill news arrive? charity doth hear it with an unwilling ear and a sad heart, although not particularly concerned in it. The sight of a wreck at sea, of a field spread with carcasses, of a

[z] Rom. xii. 15. [a] 1 Cor. xii. 26.
[b] 2 Cor. xiii. 9; Phil. ii. 2; iv. 1; 1 Thess. iii. 9; iv. 19.
[b] 3 John 4. [c] Luke xv. 7. 10.
[d] 1 Thess. iii. 9; 2 Thess. i. 3; 1 Cor. i. 4, 5; (Phil. i. 3; Rom. i. 8; Eph. i. 16; Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2;) Eph. v. 20.
[e] 1 Tim. ii. 1. [f] Κλαίειν. Rom. xii. 15.

country desolated, of houses burnt and cities ruined, and of the like calamities incident to mankind, would touch the bowels of any man; but the very report of them would affect the heart of charity. It doth not suffer a man with comfort or ease to enjoy the accomodations of his own state, while others before him are in distress: it cannot be merry while any man in presence is sorrowful: it cannot seem happy while its neighbour doth appear miserable: it hath a share in all the afflictions which it doth behold or hear of, according to that instance in St. Paul of the Philippians, *Ye have done well, that ye did communicate with*[z] (or partake in) *my afflictions;* and according to that precept, *Remember those which are in bonds, as bound with them.*

Such was the charity of Job: *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?*[a]

Such was the charity of the Psalmist, even toward his ingrateful enemies: *They* (saith he) *rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul;* but as for me, when they were sick, *my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother; I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.*[b]

Such was the charity of St. Paul: *Who is weak* (said he) *and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*[c] with fervent compassion.

Such was the charity of our Saviour; which so reigned in his heart, that no passion is so often attributed to him as this of pity, it being expressed to be the motive of his great works. *Jesus* (saith St. Matthew) *went forth, and saw a great multitude,* καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, *and was moved* (in his bowels) *with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick:*[x] and, *I have compassion*[*] *on the multitude, because they have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way:*[y] and, *Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes:*[w] and, *Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him* (the leper), *and saith unto him, I will, be thou clean:*[v] and, *When the Lord saw her* (the widow of Nain, whose son was carried out), *he had compassion on her:*[u] and, *He beheld the city, and wept over it,*[p] considering the miseries impendent on it, as a just punishment of their outrageous injuries against himself: and when the two good sisters did bewail their brother Lazarus, *He groaned in spirit, and was troubled;* and *wept* with them: whence the Jews did collect, *Behold how he loved him!*[q]

Thus any calamity or misfortune befalling his neighbour doth raise distasteful regret and commiseration in a charitable soul; but especially moral evils (which indeed are the great evils, in comparison whereto nothing else is evil) do work that effect; to see men dishonour and wrong their Maker, to provoke his anger, and incur his disfavour; to see men abuse their reason, and disgrace their nature; to see men endamage their spiritual estate, to endanger the loss of their souls, to discost from their happiness, and run into eternal ruin, by distemper of mind and an inordinate conversation; this is most afflictive to a man endued with any good degree of charity. Could one see a man sprawling on the ground, weltering in his blood, with gaping wounds, gasping for breath, without compassion? And seeing the condition of him that lieth groveling in sin, weltering in guilt, wounded with bitter remorse and pangs of conscience, nearly obnoxious to eternal death, is far worse and more deplorable; how can it but touch the heart of a charitable man, and stir his bowels with compassionate anguish?

Such was the excellent charity of the holy Psalmist, signified in those ejaculations: *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word:* and, *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.*[r]

Such was the charity of St. Paul toward his incredulous and obdurate countrymen (notwithstanding their hatred and ill treatment of himself), the which he so earnestly did aver in those words: *I say*

[*] Σπλαγχνίζομαι.

[z] Συγκοινωνήσαντες. Heb. xiii. 3.
[a] Job xxx. 25
[b] Psal. xxxv. 12, 13, 14.
[c] 2 Cor. xi. 29.
[x] Matt. xiv. 14.
[y] Matt. xv. 32.
[w] Matt. xx. 34.
[v] Mark i. 41.
[u] Luke vii. 13.
[p] Luke xix. 41.
[q] John xi. 33, 35, 36
[r] Psal. cxix. 158; cxix. 136.

the truth, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart[s] for them.

Such was the charity of our Lord, which disposed him, as to a continual sense of men's evils, so upon particular occasions to grieve at their sins and spiritual wants; as when the Pharisees maligned him for his doing good, he, it is said, did *συλλυπεῖσθαι, grieve* (or condole) *for the hardness of their heart;*[t] and, *When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd:*[u] and when *he wept over Jerusalem*, because it did not *know in its day the things which belonged to its peace,*[w] (either temporal, or eternal.)

This is that charity, which God himself in a wonderful and incomprehensible manner doth exemplify to us: for he is *the Father of pities; πολύσπλαγχνος, full of bowels;* his *bowels are troubled*, and *do sound*, when he is (for upholding justice, or reclaiming sinners) constrained to inflict punishment; of him it is said, that *his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel;* and that he was *afflicted in all the affections* of his people.[x] So incredible miracles doth infinite charity work in God, that the impassible God in a manner should suffer with us, that happiness itself should partake in our misery; that grief should spring up in the fountain of joy. How this can be, we thoroughly cannot well apprehend; but surely those expresses are used in condescension to signify the greatly charitable benignity of God, and to show us our duty, that *we should be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful*, sympathizing with the miseries and sorrows of our brethren.[y]

This is that duty which is so frequently inculcated; when we are charged to *put on bowels of pity*, to be *εὔσπλαγχνοι, tender-hearted*, to be *συμπαθεῖς, compassionate* one toward another.[z]

[s] Rom. ix. 1, 2.
[t] Mark iii. 5.
[u] Matt. ix. 36.
[w] Luke xix. 41.
[x] James v. 11; Luke i. 78; Jer. xxxi. 20; Isa. lxiii. 15; Judg. x. 16; (ὠλιγώθη. LXX.) Isa. lxiii. 9; (Hos. xi. 8.)
[y] Luke vi. 36; Eph. v. 1; (Luke xvi. 20.)
[z] Col. iii. 12; Phil. ii. 1; Eph. iv. 32; 1 Pet. iii. 8.

Hence it is, that good men in this world cannot live in any briskness of mirth or height of jollity, their own enjoyments being tempered by the discontents of others; the continual obvious spectacles of sorrow and of sin damping their pleasures, and quashing excessive transports of joy: for who could much enjoy himself in an hospital, in a prison, in a charnel?

V. It is generally a property of love to appropriate its object; in apprehension and affection embracing it, possessing it, enjoying it as its own: so charity doth make our neighbour to be ours, engaging us to tender his case and his concerns as our own; so that we shall exercise about them the same affections of soul (the same desires, the same hopes and fears, the same joys and sorrows), as about our own nearest and most peculiar interest; so that his danger will affright us, and in his security we shall find repose; his profit is gain, and his losses are damages to us; we do rise by his preferment, and sink down by his fall; his good speed is a satisfaction, and his disappointment a cross to us; his enjoyments afford pleasure, and his sufferings bring pain to us.

So charity doth enlarge our minds beyond private considerations, conferring on them an universal interest, and reducing all the world within the verge of their affectionate care; so that a man's self is a very small and inconsiderable portion of his regard: whence charity is said not to *seek its own things*, and we are commanded not to *look on our own things;*[a] for that the regard which charity beareth to its own interest, in comparison to that which it beareth toward the concerns of others, hath the same proportion as one man hath to all men; being therefore exceedingly small, and as it were none at all.

This (saith St. Chrysostom) *is the canon of most perfect Christianism, this is an exact boundary, this is the highest top of it, to seek things profitable to the public:** and *according to this rule* charity *doth walk*,[b] it prescribeth that compass to itself, it aspireth to that pitch; it dis-

* Τοῦτο κανὼν χριστιανισμοῦ τοῦ πλειστάτου, τοῦτο ὅρος ἠκριβωμένος, αὕτη ἡ κορυφὴ ἡ ἀνωτάτω, τὸ τὰ κοινὴ συμφέροντα ζητεῖν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. xxv.

[a] 1 Cor. xiii. 5; x. 24; Phil. ii. 4.
[b] Phil. iv. 16.

poseth to act as St. Paul did, *I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*[c]

VI. It is a property of love to affect union, or the greatest approximation that can be to its object. As hatred doth set things at distance, making them to shun or chase away one another; so love doth attract things, doth combine them, doth hold them fast together; every one would be embracing and enjoying what he loveth in the manner whereof it is capable: so doth charity dispose a man to conjunction with others; it soon will breed acquaintance, kind conversation, and amicable correspondence with our neighbour.

It would be a stranger to no man, to whom by its intercourse it may yield any benefit or comfort.

Its arms are always open, and its bosom free to receive all, who do not reject or decline its amity.

It is most frankly accessible, most affable, most tractable, most sociable, most apt to interchange good offices; most ready to oblige others, and willing to be obliged by them.

It avoideth that unreasonable suspiciousness and diffidence, that timorous shyness, that crafty reservedness, that supercilious morosity, that fastidious sullenness, and the like untoward dispositions, which keep men in estrangment, stifling good inclinations to familiarity and friendship.

VII. It is a property of love to desire a reciprocal affection;* for that is the surest possession and firmest union, which is grounded upon voluntarily conspiring in affection; and if we do value any person, we cannot but prize his good-will and esteem.

Charity is the mother of friendship, not only as inclining us to love others, but as attracting others to love us; disposing us to affect their amity, and by obliging means to procure it.

Hence is that evangelical precept so often enjoined to us, of *pursuing peace with all men*, importing that we should desire and seek by all fair means the good-will of men, without which peace from them cannot subsist[d] for if they do not love us, they will be infesting us with unkind words or deeds.

VIII. Hence also charity disposeth to please our neighbour, not only by inoffensive but by obliging demeanour; by a ready complaisance and compliance with his fashion, with his humour, with his desire in matters lawful, or in a way consistent with duty and discretion.

Such charity St. Paul did prescribe; *Let every one please his neighbour, for his good to edification:*[e] such he practised himself; *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit;* and, *I have made myself a servant to all, that I might gain the more.*[f]

Such was the charity of our Lord, for *even Christ pleased not himself;*[g] he indeed did stoop to converse with sorry men in their way, he came when he was invited, he accepted their entertainment, he from the frankness of his conversation with all sorts of persons did undergo the reproach of being a *winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*[h]

It is the genius and complexion of charity to affect nothing uncouth or singular in matters of indifferent nature; to be candid, not rigid, in opinion; to be pliable, not stiff, in humour; to be smooth and gentle, not rugged and peevish, in behaviour.

It doth indeed not flatter, not soothe, not humour any man in bad things, or in things very absurd and foolish; it would rather choose to displease and cross him, than to abuse, to delude, to wrong, or hurt him; but excepting such cases, it gladly pleaseth all men, denying its own will and conceit to satisfy the pleasure and fancy of others; practising that which St. Peter enjoined in that precept, *Be of one mind, be compassionate, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous;** or as St. Paul might intend, when he bid us χαρίζεσθαι ἀλλήλοις, *to gratify, to indulge one another.*[i]

IX. Love of our neighbour doth imply readiness upon all occasions to do him good, to promote and advance his benefit in all kinds.

* Spes mutuæ charitatis.—*Sen.* Ep. ix.

[c] 1 Cor. x. 33.

[d] Heb. xii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Rom. xii. 18.

* Ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὔσπλαγχνοι, φιλόφρονες. 1 Pet. iii. 8.

[e] Rom. xv. 2. [f] 1 Cor. x. 33; ix. 19.

[g] Rom. xv. 3; John ii. 2.

[h] Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 34.

[i] Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13.

It doth not rest in good opinions of mind, and good affections of heart, but from those roots doth put forth abundant fruits of real beneficence; it will not be satisfied with faint desires or sluggish wishes, but will be up and doing what it can for its neighbour.

Love is a busy and active, a vigorous and sprightful, a courageous and industrious disposition of soul; which will prompt a man, and push him forward to undertake or undergo anything, to endure pains, to encounter dangers, to surmount difficulties, for the good of its object.

Such is true charity: it will dispose us *to love*, as St. John prescribeth, ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, *in work and in truth*;[j] not only in mental desire, but in effectual performance; not only in verbal pretence, but in real effect.

Hence charity will render a man a general benefactor, in all matters, upon all occasions; affording to his neighbour all kinds of assistance and relief, according to his neighbour's need, and his own ability: it will make him a bountiful dispenser of his goods to the poor, a comforter of the afflicted, a visitor of the sick, an instructor of the ignorant, an adviser of the doubtful, a protector of the oppressed, a hospitable entertainer of strangers, a reconciler of differences, an intercessor for offenders, an advocate of those who need defence, a succourer of all that want help.*

The practice of Job describeth its nature: *I* (saith he) *delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. If I have held the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering. The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller.*[l]

Such is a charitable man; the sun is not more liberal of his light and warmth, than he is of beneficial influence.

He doth not spare his substance, being *rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate:* and where his estate faileth, yet the contribution of his endeavour will not be wanting; he will be ready to draw and press others to beneficence: so doing good not only according to his power, but in a manner beyond it, making their ability of others to supply his own weakness, and being liberal with their wealth. The description of Cimon is a good character of a charitable man, *Nulli fides ejus, nulli opera, nulli res familiaris defuit.*[m]

Thus may the poorest men be great benefactors: so the poor apostles, who *had nothing*, yet *did enrich many*; not only in spiritual treasure, but taking care for supply of the poor, by their precepts and moving exhortations; and he that *had not where to lay his head*, was the most bountiful person that ever was: *for our sake he became poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich.*[n]

In all kinds charity disposeth to further our neighbour's good, but especially in the concerns of his soul; the which as incomparably they do surpass all others, so it is the truest and noblest charity to promote them.

It will incline us *to draw forth our soul to the hungry, and to satisfy the afflicted soul; to bring the poor that are cast out to our house; to cover the naked, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke*;[p] to supply any corporal indigency, to relieve any temporal distress: but especially it will induce to make provision for the soul, to relieve the spiritual needs of our neighbour; by affording him good instruction, and taking care that he be informed in his duty, or conducted in his way to happiness; by admonition and exhortation quickening, encouraging, *provoking*, spur-

* Ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων. Acts. xx. 35.—Ἀντέχεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενῶν. 1 Thess. v. 14.—Παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους. 1 Thess. v. 14; Job xxix. 17; xxxi. 32.

j Love is strong as death.—Cant. viii. 6.

k 1 John iii. 8; James ii. 16.

l Job xxix. 12; xxxi. 16, 32.

m Corn. Nep. in Cimone.

n (1 Cor. iv. 10;) 2 Cor. vi. 10,—ὡς πτωχοί, πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες. o 2 Cor. viii. 9.

p Isa. lviii 7-10; Ezek. xviii. 16.

ring him *to good works*;[q] by resolving him in his doubts, and comforting him in his troubles of conscience; (*lifting up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*;[r]) by seasonable and prudent reproof; by all ways *serving to convert him from the error of his way*; and so *saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins*; which is the proper work of charity; for *charity* (saith St. Peter) *covereth a multitude of sins*.[s]

This was the charity of our Saviour: *He went about doing good*, healing the bodily infirmities (*every sickness and every disease among the people*[t]), satisfying their bodily necessities, comforting them in their worldly distresses, so far as to perform great miracles for those purposes (curing inveterate maladies, restoring limbs and senses, raising the dead, multiplying loaves and fishes:) but his charity was chiefly exercised in spiritual beneficence; in purveying sustenance and comfort for their souls, in feeding their minds by wholesome instruction, in curing their spiritual distempers, in correcting their ignorances and errors, in exciting them to duty by powerful advices and exhortations, in supporting them by heavenly consolations against temptations and troubles.[u]

Thus also did the charity of the holy apostles principally exert itself: they did not neglect affording relief to the outward needs of men; they did take care by earnest intercession and exhortation for support of the poor; but especially they did labour to promote the spiritual benefit of men: for this they did undertake so many cares, and toils, and travels; for this they did undergo so many hardships, so many hazards, so many difficulties and troubles:[v] *Therefore*, said St. Paul, *I endure all things for the elects' sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*.[w]

X. This indeed is a property of charity, to make a man deny himself, to neglect his own interest, yea, to despise all selfish regards, for the benefit of his neighbour: to him that is inspired with charity, his own good is not good, when it standeth in competition with the more considerable good of another; nothing is so dear to him, which he gladly will not part with upon such considerations.

Liberty is a precious thing, which every man gladly would enjoy; yet how little did St. Paul's charity regard it! how absolutely did he abandon it for his neighbour's good! *Though* (said he) *I am free from all men, yet I have made myself servant* (or have enslaved myself) *unto all*,[x] *that I might gain the more*: and he did express much satisfaction in the bonds which he bare for the good of his brethren.[y] *I Paul* (saith he) *the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;—I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds;—endure all things for the elect's sake*.[z]

Every man loveth his own humour, and would please himself: but the charity of St. Paul did rather choose *to please all men; making him all things to all men, that by all means he might save some*: and the rule he commended to others, and imposed on himself, was this: *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves*.[a]

Profit is the common mark of men's designs and endeavours: but charity often doth not aim thereat, but waveth it for its neighbour's advantage: for μὴ ὁ ἑαυτοῦ σκοπεῖτε, *Aim not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others*, is St. Paul's rule; and, *Not to seek his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved*, was his practice.[b]

To suffer is grievous to human nature, and every man would shun it; but charity not only doth support it, but joyeth in it, when it conduceth to its neighbour's advantage: *I rejoice* (said that charitable Apostle) *in my sufferings for you*.[c]

Ease is a thing generally desirable and acceptable; but charity doth part with it, embracing labour, watchings, travels, and

[q] Εἰς παροξυσμὸν καλῶν ἔργων. Heb. x. 24.
[r] Ἀνορθώσατε. Heb. xii. 12.
[s] 1 Thess. v. 14; James v. 20; 1 Pet. iv. 8; Prov. x. 12.
[t] Acts x. 38; Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35.
[u] John xiv. 1; xv. 11; xvi. 33; Matt. v. 10.
[v] Acts iii. 6; v. 15, 16; viii. 7; xxviii. 8, 9; xx. 35; Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; Gal. ii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 7; ix. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 18; Heb. xiii. 16.
[w] 2 Tim. ii. 10.
[x] Πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα. 1 Cor. ix. 19.
[y] Phil. i. 12.
[z] Eph iii. 1-13; 2 Tim. ii. 9, 10.
[a] 1 Cor. ix. 33; x. 22; Rom. xv. 1.
[b] Phil. ii. 4; 1 Cor. x. 23.
[c] Col. i. 24; 2 Cor. i. 4, 6; vii. 4.

troubles for its neighbour's good: upon this account did the holy apostles undertake *abundant labours*, as St. Paul telleth us; and *to this end* (saith he) *do I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily:* to what end? *that we present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:* this is that κόπος ἀγάπης, that *labour of love*, which they did commend in others, and so notably themselves exercise.[d]

Life of all things is held most precious and dear; yet *this* charity upon urgent occasions will expose, will sacrifice for its neighbour's good: *This* (our Lord telleth us) *is the greatest love that any man can express to his friend;*[e] and the highest instance that ever was of charity was herein showed; the imitation whereof St. John doth not doubt to recommend to us: *In this* (saith he) *have we known the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren:* and St. Paul, *Walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God:* the which precept he backed with his own example: *I* (saith he) *very gladly will spend and be spent for your souls;* and, *If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all;* and, *Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.*[f]

Reputation to some is more dear than life, and it is worse than death to be held a malefactor, to be loaded with odious reproaches, to have an infamous character; yet charity will engage men hereto, willingly to sustain the most grievous obloquy and disgrace: for this the same heroical apostles did pass through *honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true:*[g]—for this they *were made a spectacle to the world, as fools, as weak, as depicable;* were *reviled, defamed, made as the filth of the world, and offscouring of all things.*[h] For this St. Paul was content to *suffer*, ὡς κακοῦργος, *as a malefactor.*[i] So there was nothing which charity will not deny itself and lose for the good of its neighbour.

XI. It is a property of love not to stand upon distinctions and nice repects; but to be condescensive, and willing to perform the meanest offices, needful or useful for the good of its friend.

He that truly loveth, is a voluntary servant, and gladly will stoop to any employment, for which the need or considerable benefit of him whom he loveth doth call.

So the greatest souls, and the most glorious beings, the which are most endued with charity, by it are disposed with greatest readiness to serve their inferiors.

This made St. Paul constitute himself *a servant* (we might render it a slave) *of all men*,[j] absolutely devoted to the promoting their interests with his utmost labour and diligence; undertaking toilsome drudgeries, running about upon errands for them.

This maketh the blessed and glorious angels (the principalities and powers above) vouchsafe to wait on men, to be the guards of all good men, to be ministering spirits, *sent out to minister for them who shall inherit salvation:*[k] not only obedience to God enforceth them, but charity disposeth them gladly to serve us, who are so much their inferiors; the same charity, which produceth joy in them at the conversion of a sinner.[l]

This made the Son of God to descend from heaven, and lay aside that *glory which he had with God before the world was;*[m] this made him who was so *rich to become poor, that we by his poverty might be enriched;* this made him *converse* and demean himself among his servants, *as he that ministered;*[n] this made him to wash his disciples' feet, thereby designing instructively to exemplify the duty and nature of charity; for, *If* (said he) *I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, then ye also ought to wash*

[d] 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 23; vi. 5. Εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος. Col. i. 29; Acts xxi. 31, 35; Heb. vi. 7; 1 Thess. i. 3.
[e] John xv. 13.
[f] 1 John iii. 16; John xv. 12; Eph. v. 2; 2 Cor xii. 15; Phil. ii. 17; 1 Thess. ii. 8.
[g] 2 Cor. vi. 8.
[h] 1 Cor. iv. 9, 10, 13.
[i] 2 Tim. ii. 9.
[j] 1 Cor. ix. 19.
[k] Psal. xci. 11; xxxiv. 7; Heb. i. 7, 14.
[l] Luke xv. 7, 10. ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων.
[m] John xvii. 5.
[n] 2 Cor. viii. 9; Luke xxii. 27; Matt. xx. 28.

one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.[o]

This maketh God himself (*the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity*) to condescend so far, as to be continually employed in carefully watching over, in providing for, in protecting and assisting us vile and wretched *worms*, for though *he dwelleth on high, yet humbleth he himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth.*[p] This maketh him with so much pain and patience to support our infirmities to bear with our offences, to wait for our conversion; according to that protestation in the Prophet, *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.*

In conformity to this wonderful practice, whose actions are the best rules and patterns of our deportment, charity should dispose us, according to St. Paul's practice, *by love to serve one another.*[s]

Indeed it will not suffer any man to look down on another with supercilious contempt or neglect, as if he were unworthy or beneath our regard. It will incline superiors to look on their inferiors (their subjects, their servants, their meanest and poorest neighbours), not as beasts or as slaves, but as men, as brethren;[t] as descending from the same stock, as partakers of the common nature and reason: as those *who have obtained the like precious faith;*[u] as heirs of the same precious promises and glorious hopes; as their equals in the best things, and in all considerable advantages; equals in God's sight, and according to our Lord's intent, when he said, *One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;*[v] according to St. Paul's exhortation to Philemon, that he would receive Onesimus, *not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved in the Lord.*[w]

Accordingly, charity will dispose men of rankin their behaviour to be condescensive, lowly, meek, courteous, obliging and helpful, to those who in human eye or in worldly state are most below them; remembering that ordinance of our Lord, charged on all his diciples, and enforced by his own pattern: *He that is greatest among you let him be your servant.*[x]

Love indeed is the great leveller, which in a manner setteth all things on even ground, and reduceth to a just poise;* which bringeth down heaven to earth, and raiseth up earth to heaven; which inclineth the highest to wait upon the lowest; which engageth the strength of the mightiest to help the weakest, and the wealth of the richest to supply the poorest, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, that *there may be an equality;*[y] that nowhere there may be an useless abundance, or a helpless indigence.

XII. Charity doth regulate our dealing, our deportment, our conversation, toward our neighbour, implying good usage and fair treatment of him on all occasions; for no man doth handle that which he loveth rudely or roughly, so as to endanger the loss, the detriment, the hurt or offence thereof.

Wherefore the language of charity is soft and sweet, not wounding the heart, nor grating on the ear of any with whom a man converseth; like the language of which the Wise Man saith, *The words of the pure are pleasant words;*—such as are *sweet to the soul, and health to the bones:* and, *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious;*[z] such as our Lord's were λόγοι χάριτος, *words of grace;*[a] such as the Apostle speaketh of, *Let your speech be always* ἐν χάριτι, *with grace*—such as may *give grace to the hearers;*[b] being entertained, not with aversation, but with favourable acceptance.

Its carriage is gentle, courteous, benign; bearing in it marks of affection and kind respect.

Its dealing is equal, moderate, fair; yielding no occasion of disgust or complaint; not catching at, or taking advantages, not meting hard measure.

It doth not foster any bad passion or humour, which may embitter or sour conversation, so that it rendereth a man continually good company.

[o] John xiii. 14.
[p] Psal. cxiii. 6; (Psal. viii. 4; cxliv. 3; Job vii. 17)
[q] Isa. xliii. 24.
[r] Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15.
[s] Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1; Matt. xxiii. 9.
[t] Philem. 16.
[u] Isa. lvii. 15.
[v] Gal. v. 13.
[w] 2 Pet. i. 1.
[x] Amicitia pares invenit, aut facit.
[y] Matt. xxiii. 11; Luke xxii. 27.
[z] 2 Cor. viii. 14.
[a] Prov. xv. 26; xvi. 24; Eccles. x. 12.
[b] Luke iv. 22.
Col. iv. 6. ἵνα δῷ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσι. Eph. iv. 29.

If a man be harsh or surly in his discourse, rugged or rude in his demeanour, hard and rigorous in his dealing, it is a certain argument of his defect in charity; for that calmeth and sweeteneth the mind; it quasheth keen, fierce, and boisterous passions; it discardeth those conceits, and those humours, from whence such practice doth issue.

Charity (saith St. Paul) *οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, behaveth not itself unhandsomely*;[c] is not untoward, unseemly, uncivil, or clownish in word, or in carriage, or in deed: it is in truth the most civilizing and most polishing disposition that can be: nothing doth render a man so completely genteel; not in an affected or artificial way (consisting in certain postures or motions of body (dopping, cringing, &c.); in forms of expression, or modish addresses, which men learn like parrots, and vent by rote, usually not meaning any thing by them, often with them disguising fraud and rancour), but in a real and natural manner, suggested by good judgment and hearty affection.

A charitable man may perhaps not be guilty of courtship, or may be unpractised in the modes of address; but he will not be deficient in the substance of paying every man proper and due respect: this indeed is true courtesy, grounded on reason, and proceeding from the heart; which therefore is far more genuine, more solid, more steady, than that which is built on fashion, and issueth from affectation; the which indeed only doth ape or counterfeit the deportment of charity; for what a charitable man truly is, that a gallant would seem to be.

Such are the properties of charity.

There be also further many particular acts, which have a very close alliance to it (being ever coherent with it, or springing from it), which are recommended to us by precepts in the holy Scripture; the which it will be convenient to mention.

1. It is a proper act of charity to forbear anger upon provocation, or to repress its motions; to resent injuries and discourtesies either not at all, or very calmly and mildly: for,

Charity *οὐ παροξύνεται, is not easily provoked.* Charity *μακροθυμεῖ, suffereth long and is kind.* Charity *πάντα ὑπομένει, doth endure all things.*[d]

[c] 1 Cor. xiii. 5. [d] 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7.

Anger is a violent insurrection of the mind against a person, but love is not apt to rise up in opposition against any; anger is an intemperate heat, love hath a pure warmth quite of another nature; as natural heat is from a fever; or as the heat of the sun from that of a culinary fire, which putteth that out as the sunbeams do extinguish a culinary fire: anger hath an *ὄρεξις ἀμύνης, an appetite of revenge*, or doing mischief to the object of it; but love is innocent *and worketh no evil.*[e]

Love disposeth, if our neighbour doth misbehave himself toward us (by wrongful usage, or unkind carriage), to be sorry for him, and to pity him; which are passions contrary to anger, and slaking the violences of it.

It is said in the Canticles, *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*:[f] charity would hold out against many neglects, many provocations.

Hence the precepts: *Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. Put off anger, wrath, malice*, &c. *Be slow to wrath.*[h]

2. It is a proper act of charity to remit offences, suppressing all designs of revenge, and not retaining any grudge; for,

Charity πάντα στέγει, doth cover all things; and in this sense doth *hide a multitude of sins:* all dispositions, all intents to do harm, are inconsistent with it, are quite repugnant to it.[i]

Hence those precepts: *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you: See that none render evil for evil, but ever*

[e] Rom. xiii. 10. [f] Cant. viii. 7.
[g] Ἀνέχεσθαι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ· Eph. iv. 1, 2.
[h] Eph. iv. 31; 1 Thess. v. 14. μακροθυμεῖτε. Col. iii. 8; James i. 19.
[i] 1 Cor. xiii. 7; Prov. x. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 8; James v. 20.

follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men : and many the like precepts occur in the gospels, the apostolical writings; yea, even in the Old Testament, wherein charity did not run in so high a strain.[j]

3. It is a duty coherent with charity, to maintain concord and peace; to abstain from contention and strife, together with the sources of them, pride, envy, emulation, malice.

We are commanded to be σύμψυχοι, and ὁμόφρονες, *of one soul, of one mind*, (like *the multitude of believers* in the Acts, who *had one heart and one soul;*) that we should *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;* that we should be *of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind;* that we should *all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;* that there be no factions, or *schisms in the body;* that all dissensions, all clamours, all murmurings, all emulations, should be abandoned and put away from us; that we should *pursue and maintain peace with all men :* obedience to which commands can only be the result of charity, esteeming the person and judgment of our neighbour; desiring his good will, tendering his good; curbing those fleshly lusts, and those fierce passions, from the predominancy whereof discords and strifes do spring.[k]

4. Another charitable practice is, being candid in opinion, and mild in censure, about our neighbour and his actions; having a good conceit of his person, and representing him to ourselves under the best character we can; making the most favourable construction of his words, and the fairest interpretation of his designs.

Charity disposeth us to entertain a good opinion of our neighbour; for, desiring his good, we shall be concerned for him, and prejudiced, as it were, on his side; being unwilling to discover any blemish in him to our own disappointment and regret.

Love cannot subsist without esteem; and it would not willingly, by destroying that, lose its own subsistence.

Love would preserve any good of its friend, and therefore his reputation; which is a good in itself precious, and ever very dear to him.

Love would bestow any good, and therefore its esteem; which is a considerable good.

Harsh censure is a very rude kind of treatment, grievously vexing a man, and really hurting him; charity, therefore, will not be guilty of it.

It disposeth rather to oversee and connive at faults, than to find them, or to pore on them; rather to hide and smother, than to disclose or divulge them; rather to extenuate and excuse, than to exaggerate or aggravate them.

Are words capable of a good sense? charity will expound them thereto: may an action be imputed to any good intent? charity will ever refer it thither: doth a fault admit any plea, apology, or diminution? charity will be sure to allege it: may a quality admit a good name? charity will call it thereby.[l]

It doth not λογίζεσθαι κακόν, *impute evil*, or put it to any man's account, beyond absolute necessity.

It hopeth all things, and *believeth all things;*[m] hopeth and believeth all things for the best, in favour to its neighbour, concerning his intentions and actions liable to doubt.

It banisheth *all evil surmises;*[n] it rejecteth all ill stories, malicious insinuations, perverse glosses and descants.

5. Another charitable practice is, to comport with the infirmities of our neighbour; according to that rule of St. Paul, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,*[o] *and not to please ourselves;* and that precept, *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

Is a man wiser than his neighbour, or in any case freer of defects? charity will dispose to use that advantage so as

[j] Col. iii. 12, 13; μομφήν; Eph. iv. 32; 1 Thess. v. 15; 1 Pet. iii. 9; Rom. xii. 17; Matt vi. 14; v. 44; Prov. xx. 22; xxv 21.

[k] Phil. ii. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 8; Acts iv. 32; Eph. iv. 3; Phil. ii. 2; i. 27; 1 Cor. i. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Rom. xv. 5, 6; xii. 16; Phil. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 25; xi. 18; i. 11; iii. 3; 2 Cor. xii. 20; Phil. ii. 14; Heb. xii. 14; Rom. xii. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 22; James iv. 1; 1 Cor. iii. 3; Gal. v. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 4.

[l] 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

[m] 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

[n] 1 Tim. vi. 4.

[o] Ἀντέχεσθαι ἀσθενῶν. Acts xx. 35; 1 Thess. v. 14; Rom. xv. 1; Gal. vi. 2.

not to contemn him, or insult over him; but to instruct him, to help him, to comfort him.

As we deal with children, allowing to the infirmities of their age, bearing their ignorance, frowardness, untoward humours, without distasting them; so should we with our brethren who labour under any weakness of mind or humour.

6. It is an act of charity to abstain from offending or scandalizing our brethren; by doing anything, which either may occasion him to commit sin, or disaffect him to religion, or discourage him in the practice of duty (that which St. Paul calleth to *defile*[p] and *smite his weak conscience*,)[q] or which anywise may discompose, vex, and *grieve* him: for, *If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably*.[r]

SERMON XXVIII.

MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS TO CHARITY.

HEB. x. 24.—*Let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works.*

THAT which is here recommended by the Apostle, as the common duty of Christians toward each other, upon emergent occasions, with zeal and care to provoke one another to the practice of charity and beneficence, may well be conceived the special duty of those, whose office it is to instruct and guide others, when opportunity is afforded: with that obligation I shall now comply, by representing divers considerations serving to excite and encourage us to that practice: this (without premising any description or explication of the duty; the nature, the special acts, and properties whereof I have already declared) I shall immediately undertake.

I. First, then, I desire you to remember and consider that you are men, and as such obliged to this duty, as being very agreeable to human nature; the which, not being corrupted or distempered by ill use, doth incline to it, doth call for it, doth like and approve it, doth find satisfaction and delight therein.

St. Paul chargeth us to be εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, or *to have a natural affection one toward another*:[s] that supposeth a στοργὴ inbred to men, which should be roused up, improved, and exercised. Such an one indeed there is, which, although often raked up and smothered in the common attendances on the providing for our needs, and prosecuting our affairs, will upon occasion more or less break forth and discover itself.

That the constitution and frame of our nature disposeth to it, we cannot but feel, when our bowels are touched with a sensible pain at the view of any calamitous object; when our fancies are disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling a man; when the sight of a tragedy wringeth compassion and tears from us: which affections we can hardly quash by any reflection, that such events, true or feigned, do not concern ourselves.

Hence doth nature so strongly affect society, and abhor solitude; so that a man cannot enjoy himself alone, or find satisfaction in any good without a companion:* not only for that he then cannot receive, but also because he cannot impart assistance, consolation, and delight in converse: for men do not affect society only that they may obtain benefits thereby; but as much or more, that they may be enabled to communicate them; nothing being more distasteful than to be always on the taking hand: neither indeed hath any thing a more pleasant and savoury relish than to do good; as even Epicurus, the great patron of pleasure, did confess.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency, do at first sight, without aid of any discursive reflection, obtain approbation and applause from men; being acceptable and amiable to their mind, as beauty to their sight, harmony to their

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p Μολύνεται. 1 Cor. x. 7.

q Τύπτοντες τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν. 1 Cor. viii. 12; Rom. xiv. 15.

r Οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖς. 1 Cor. x. 32; viii. 13; Rom. xiv. 21.

* Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἕλοιτ' ἂν καθ' αὑτὸν τὰ πάντ' ἔχειν ἀγαθά.—Arist. Eth. ix. 9.

Hominem homini natura conciliat. *Sen. Ep.* ix.

Nullius boni sine socio jucunda possessio est. *Sen. Ep.* vi.

Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς βουλόμενος συνδῆσαι πάντας ἀλλήλοις, τοιαύτην τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐπέθηκεν ἀνάλκην. ὡς ἐν τῷ τῶν πλησίον συμφέροντι τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου δεδίσθαι· καὶ ὁ κόσμος ἅπας οὕτω συνέστηκε.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv.

s Rom. xii. 10.

hearing, fragrancy to their smell, and sweetness to their taste: and, correspondently, uncharitable dispositions and practices (malignity, harshness, cruelty) do offend the mind with a disgustful resentment of them.

We may appeal to the conscience of each man, if he doth not feel dissatisfaction in that fierceness, or frowardness of temper, which produceth uncharitableness; if he have not a complacence in that sweet and calm disposition of soul, whence charity doth issue; if he do not condemn himself for the one, and approve himself in the other practice.

This is the common judgment of men; and therefore in common language this practice is styled humanity, as best sorting with our nature, and becoming it;* and the principle whence it springeth is called good nature: and the contrary practice is styled inhumanity, as thwarting our natural inclinations, or divesting us of manhood: and its source likewise is termed ill-nature, or a corruption of our nature.

It is therefore a monstrous paradox, crossing the common sense of men, which in this loose and vain world hath lately got such vogue, that all men naturally are enemies one to another: it pretendeth to be grounded on common observation and experience; but it is only an observing the worst actions of the worst men; of dissolute ruffians, of villainous cheats, of ravenous oppressors, of malicious politicians, of such degenerate apostates from humanity; by whose practice (debauched by vain conceits and naughty customs) an ill measure is taken of mankind. Aristotle himself, who had observed things as well as any of these men, and with as sharp a judgment, affirmeth the contrary, that all men are friends, and disposed to entertain friendly correspondence with one another:† indeed to say the contrary is a blasphemy against the Author of our nature; and is spoken no less out of profane enmity against him, than out of venomous malignity against men: out of hatred to God and goodness, they would disparage and vilify the noblest work of God's creation; yet do they, if we sound the bottom of their mind, imply themselves to admire this quality, and by their decrying it do commend it: for it is easy to discern that therefore only they slander mankind as uncapable of goodness, because out of malignity they would not allow it so excellent a quality.

II. Let us consider what our neighbour is; how near in blood, how like in nature, how much in all considerable respects the same with us he is.

Should any one wrong or defame our brother, we should be displeased; should we do it ourselves, or should we omit any office of kindness toward him, we should blame ourselves: every man is such, of one stock, of one blood with us; and as such may challenge and call for real affection from us.

Should any one mar, tear, or deface our picture, or show any kind of disrespect thereto, we should be offended, taking it for an indignity put on ourselves;† and as for ourselves, we should never in such a manner affront or despite ourselves: every man is such, our most lively image, representing us most exactly in all the main figures and features of body, of soul, of state; we thence do owe respect to every one.

Every man is another self, partaker of the same nature, endued with the same faculties, subject to the same laws, liable to the same fortunes; distinguished from us only in accidental and variable circumstances; whence if we be amiable or estimable, so is he upon the same grounds; and acting impartially (according to right judgment) we should yield love and esteem to him, by slighting, hating, injuring, hurting him, we do consequentially abuse ourselves, or acknowledge ourselves deservedly liable to the same usage.

Every man, as a Christian, is in a higher and nobler way allied, assimilated, and identified to us; to him, therefore, upon the like grounds, improved charity is

* Εἰς γὰρ φιλανθρωπίας ἔργα ὑπὸ Θεοῦ κατεσκευάσμεθα.—Flavian. CP. Ep. in Syn. Chalc. Act i. p. 111.

† Οἰκεῖον πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον.—Arist. Eth. viii. 1; Rhet. i. 11.

Ἐνέθηκε γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς φίλτρον τῇ φύσει τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ, ὥστε ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν.—Chrys. in Eph. Orat. ii.

Συνδεσμῶν εἰς ὁμογνωμοσύνην ὁ ἀριστοτέχνης Θεὸς ἦν ἐδημιούργησε φύσιν τῇ διαθέσει τοὺς λογικοὺς διοικούμενος συνέσφιγξε, &c. Proclus Constinopl. Syn. Chalc. Act xiv.

* Δι' ὁμοιότητες πάντα φιλεῖ πρὸς ἄλληλα συνάπτεσθαι.—Plato Symp.

more due; and we wrong our heavenly relations, our better nature, our more considerable selves, in withholding it from him.

III. Equity doth plainly require charity from us: for every one is ready not only to wish and seek, but to demand and claim love from others; so as to be much offended and grievously to complain, if he do not find it.

We do all conceive love and respect due to us from all men; we take all men bound to wish and tender our welfare; we suppose our need to require commiseration and succour from every man: if it be refused, we think it a hard case, and that we are ill used; we cry out of wrong, of discourtesy, of inhumanity, of baseness practised toward us.

A moderate respect and affection will hardly satisfy us; we pretend to them in the highest degree, disgusting the least appearance of disregard or disaffection; we can scarce better digest indifference than hatred.

This evidenceth our opinion and conscience to be, that we ought to pay the greatest respect and kindness to our neighbour: for it is plainly unjust and ridiculously vain, to require that from others, which we refuse to others, who may demand it upon the same title; nor can we without self-condemnation practise that which we detest in others.

In all reason and equity, if I would have another my friend, I must be a friend to him; if I pretend to charity from all men, I must render it to all in the same kind and measure.

Hence is the law of charity well expressed in those terms, *of doing to others whatever we would have them do to us*;[b] whereby the palpable equity of this practice is demonstrated.

IV. Let us consider that charity is a right noble and worthy thing; greatly perfective of our nature; much dignifying and beautifying our soul.

It rendereth a man truly great, enlarging his mind unto a vast circumference, and to a capacity near infinite; so that it by a general care doth reach all things, by an universal affection doth embrace and grasp the world.

By it our reason obtaineth a field or scope of employment worthy of it, not confined to the slender interests of one person or one place, but extending to the concerns of all men.

Charity is the imitation and copy of that immense love, which is the fountain of all being and all good; which made all things, which preserveth the world, which sustaineth every creature: nothing advanceth us so near to a resemblance of him, who is essential love and goodness; who freely and purely, without any regard to his own advantage or capacity of finding any beneficial return, doth bear and express the highest good-will, with a liberal hand pouring down showers of bounty and mercy on all his creatures; who daily putteth up numberless indignities and injuries, upholding and maintaining those who offend and provoke him.*

Charity rendereth us as angels, or peers to those glorious and blessed creatures, who, without receiving or expecting any requital from us, do heartily desire and delight in our good, are ready to promote it, do willingly serve and labour for it. Nothing is more amiable, more admirable, more venerable, even in the common eye and opinion of men; it hath in it a beauty and a majesty apt to ravish every heart; even a spark of it in generosity of dealing breedeth admiration, a glimpse of it in formal courtesy of behaviour procureth much esteem, being deemed to accomplish and adorn a man: how lovely, therefore, and truly gallant, is an entire, sincere, constant and uniform practice thereof, issuing from pure good-will and affection!

Love, indeed, or goodness (for true love is nothing else but goodness exerting itself, in direction toward objects capable of its influence) is the only amiable and only honourable thing: power and wit may be admired by some, or have some fond idolaters; but being severed from goodness, or abstracted from their subserviency to it, they cannot obtain real love, they deserve not any esteem: for

[b] Matt. vii.

* Ἡμᾶς εἴτις ἐρωτήσειε, τί τὸ τιμώμενον ὑμῖν καὶ προσκυνούμενον, πρόχειρον εἰπεῖν ἡ ἀγάπη; ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ἡ ἀγάπη ἐστὶ, ῥῆσις τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, καὶ τοῦτο χαίρει μᾶλλον ἀκούων ὁ Θεὸς, ἢ τι ἄλλο.—Naz. Or. 11.

Καθ' ἑκάστην ὑβρίζεται τὴν ἡμέραν, παρῶν καὶ ὁρῶν, καὶ ἀκούων, καὶ οὔτε σκηπτὸν ἀφῆκε, &c. —Chrys. Ἀνδρ. γ'.

[c] Chrys. in Eph. Or. 9.

the worst, the most unhappy, the most odious and contemptible of beings, do partake of them in a high measure; the prince of darkness hath more power, and reigneth with absolute sovereignty over more subjects by many, than the great Turk; one devil may have more wit than all the politic Achitophels, and all the profane Hectors in the world; yet with all his power and all his wit he is most wretched, most detestable, and most despicable: and such in proportion is every one who partaketh in his accursed dispositions of malice and uncharitableness. For,

On the other side, uncharitableness is a very mean and base thing:[d] it contracteth a man's soul into a narrow compass, or straiteneth it as it were into one point; drawing all his thoughts, his desires, his affections into himself, as to their centre; so that his reason, his will, his activity, have but one pitiful object to exercise themselves about: to scrape together a little pelf; to catch a vapour of fame, to prog for a frivolous semblance of power or dignity, to soothe the humour or pamper the sensuality of one poor worm, is the ignoble subject of his busy care and endeavour.

By it we debase ourselves into an affinity with the meanest things, becoming either like beasts or fiends: like beasts affecting only our own present sensible good; or like fiends, designing mischief and trouble to others.

It is indeed hard for a man without charity, not to be worse than an innocent beast; not at least to be as a fox, or a wolf; either cunningly lurching, or violently ravening for prey:[e] love only can restrain a man from flying at all, and seizing on whatever he meeteth; from biting, from worrying, from devouring every one that is weaker than himself, or who cannot defend himself, from his paws and teeth.

V. The practice of charity is productive of many great benefits and advantages to us: so that to love our neighbour doth involve the truest love to ourselves; and we are not only obliged in duty, but may be encouraged by our interest thereto: beatitude is often pronounced to it, or to some particular instances of it; and well may it be so, for it indeed will constitute a man happy, producing to him manifold comforts and conveniences of life: some whereof we shall touch.

VI. (1.) Charity doth free our souls of all those bad dispositions and passions which vex and disquiet them; from those gloomy passions which cloud our mind; from those keen passions which fret our heart; from those tumultuous passions which ruffle us, and discompose the frame of our soul.*

It stifleth anger (that swoon of reason, transporting a man out of himself;) for a man hardly can be incensed against those whom he tenderly loveth: a petty neglect, a hard word, a small discourtesy, will not fire a charitable soul; the greatest affront or wrong can hardly kindle rage therein.

It banisheth envy (that severely just vice, which never faileth to punish itself;) for no man will repine at his wealth or prosperity, no man will malign his worth or virtue, whose good he charitably desireth and wisheth.†

It excludeth rancour and spite, those dispositions which create a hell in our soul; which are directly repugnant to charity, and thereby dispelled as darkness by light, cold by heat.

It suffereth not revenge (that canker of the heart) to harbour in our breast; for who can intend mischief to him, in whose good he delighteth, in whose evil he feeleth displeasure?

It avoideth fear, suspicion, jealousy of mischief designed against us: the which passions *have torment*,‡ or do punish us, as St. John saith, racking us with anxious expectation of evil; wherefore *there is* (saith he) *no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear*;[f] no man indeed is apt to fear him whom he loveth, or is able much to love him whom he feareth: for love esteemeth its object as innocent, fear apprehendeth it as hurtful; love disposeth to follow and embrace, fear inclineth to decline and shun. To suspect a friend, therefore, is to disavow him for such; and upon slender grounds

[d] Sen. de Tranq. iii. [e] Ezek. xxii. 27.

* Ὁ γὰρ τοιοῦτος καὶ φθόνου καὶ ὀργῆς καὶ βασκανίας καὶ ἀπονοίας καὶ κενοδοξίας, καὶ πονηρᾶς ἐπιθυμίας, καὶ παντὸς ἔρωτος ἀτόπου, καὶ παντὸς νοσήματος καθαρεύουσαν τηρήσει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. xxxii.

† Φθόνος, ἡ ἐπάνθη τῶν ἐχόντων, ὁ τῶν πασχόντων ἰός, τὸ μόνον τῶν παθῶν ἀδικώτατόν τε ἅμα καὶ δικαιότατον, τὸ μὲν ὅτι πᾶσι διοχλεῖ τοῖς καλοῖς, τὸ δὲ ὅτι τήκει τοὺς ἔχοντας.—Gr. Naz. Or. xxvii.

‡ κόλασιν ἔχει. Oderunt quem metuunt.

[f] 1 John iv. 18.

to conceit ill of him, is to deem him unworthy of our love. The innocent and inoffensiveness of charity, which provoketh no man to do us harm, doth also breed great security and confidence: any man will think he may walk unarmed and unguarded among those to whom he beareth good-will, to whom he neither meaneth nor doeth any harm; being guarded by a good concience, and shielded with innocence.

It removeth discontent or dissatisfaction in our state; the which usually doth spring from ill conceits and surmises about our neighbour, or from wrathful and spiteful affections toward him: for while men have good respect and kindness for their neighbours, they seldom are dissatisfied in their own condition; they can never want comfort, or despair of succour.

It curbeth ambition and avarice; those impetuous, those insatiable, those troublesome dispositions: for a man will not affect to climb above those, in whose honour he findeth satisfaction, nor to scramble with them for the goods which he gladly would have them to enjoy: a competency will satisfy him, who taketh himself but for one among the rest, and who can as little endure to see others want as himself:* who would trouble himself to get power over those, to overtop them in dignity and fame, to surpass them in wealth, whom he is ready to serve in the meanest offices of kindness, whom he would in honour prefer to himself, unto whom he will liberally communicate what he hath for his comfort and relief?

In the prevalence of such bad passions and dispositions of soul our misery doth most consist; thence the chief troubles and inconveniences of our life do proceed: wherefore charity doth highly deserve of us in freeing us from them.

VII. (2.) It consequently doth settle our mind in a serene, calm, sweet, and cheerful state; in an even temper, and good humour, and harmonious order of soul; which ever will result from the evacuation of bad passions, from the composure of such as are indifferent, from the excitement of those which are good and pleasant: *The fruits of the Spirit* (saith St. Paul) *are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness*,[g] (or benignity:) love precedeth, joy and peace follow as its constant attendants,* gentleness and benignity come after as its certain effects.

Love, indeed, is the sweetest of all passions, ever accompanied with a secret delectation and pleasant sense; whenever it is placed upon a good object, when it acteth in a rational way, when it is vigorous, it must needs yield much joy.

It therefore greatly conduceth to our happiness, or rather alone doth suffice to constitute us happy.

VIII. (3.) Charity will preserve us from divers external mischiefs and inconveniences, to which our life is exposed, and which otherwise we shall incur.

If we have not charity towards men, we shall have enmity with them; and upon that do wait troops of mischief: we shall enjoy nothing quietly or safely, we shall do nothing without opposition or contention; no conversation, no commerce will be pleasant: clamour, obloquy, tumult, and trouble will surround us; we shall live in perpetual danger, the enmity of the meanest and weakest creature being formidable.

But all such mischiefs charity will prevent or remove; damming up the fountains, or extirpating the roots of them: for who will hate a person that apparently loveth him? who can be so barbarous or base as to hurt that man whom he findeth ever ready to do himself good? what brute, what devil, can find in his heart to be a foe to him who is a sure friend to all?† No publican can be so wretchedly vile, no sinner so destitute of goodness; for, *If* (saith our Lord, upon common experience) *ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?* and, *If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same:*[h] it seemeth beyond the greatest

* Κατὰ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαπωμένου οὐκ ἂν τις ἐπαρθείη ποτέ.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.

* Eldest daughter.

† Τίς δ' ἂν καὶ ἐχθρὸς εὐλόγως γένοιτο ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ μίαν οὐδαμῶς παρέχοντος αἰτίαν ἔχθρας; — Clem. Str. vii. p. 532.

Chrys. in 1 Thess. Or. iv.—Κἂν θηρίον ἐκεῖνος ᾖ, κἂν λίθος, &c.

Οὐδεὶς ἐχθρὸς τῷ σπουδαίῳ.—Hier.

Οὐχ οἶυντε τὸν ἀγαπώμενον μὴ καὶ ἀγαπᾶν.—Chris. in Gen. Or. xxxii.

[g] Gal. v. 22; Eph. vi. 12; Col. iii. 12.

[h] Matt. v. 46.

degeneracy and corruption whereof human nature is capable, to requite charity with enmity, yea not to return some kindness for it: *Τίς ὁ κακώσων; who* (saith St. Peter) *is he that will do you hurt, if ye be followers of that which is good?* or imitators of him that is good (of the sovereign goodness?) none surely can be so unjust or so unworthy.

As charity restraineth us from doing any wrong, or yielding any offence to others in thought, in word, in deed; from entertaining any bad conceits without ground, from hatching any mischievous designs against our neighbour; from using any harsh, virulent, biting language; from any rugged, discourteous, disobliging behaviour; from any wrongful, rigorous, severe dealing toward him; from any contemptuous pride, or supercilious arrogance: so it consequently will defend us from the like treatment: for scarce any man is so malicious as without any provocation to do mischief; no man is so incorrigibly savage, as to persist in committing outrage upon perfect innocence, joined with patience, with meekness, with courtesy:* charity will melt the hardest heart, and charm the fiercest spirit; it will bind the most violent hand, it will still the most obstreperous tongue; it will reconcile the most offended, most prejudiced heart: it is the best guard that can be of our safety from assults, of our interest from damage, of our reputation from slander, detraction, and reproach.†

If you would have examples of this, experience will afford many; and some we have in the sacred records commended to our observation: Esau was a rough man, and one who had been exceedingly provoked by his brother Jacob;[j] yet how did meek and respectful demeanour overcome him! so that *Esau* (it is said in the history) *ran to meet him* (Jacob), *and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.*[k]

Saul was a man possessed with a furious envy and spite against David; yet into what expressions did the sense of his kind dealing force him! *Is this thy voice, my son David?—Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil:—behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.*[l] So doth charity subdue and triumph over the most inveterate prejudices, and the most violent passions of men.

If peace and quiet be desirable things, as certainly they are, and that form implieth, when by wishing peace with men, we are understood to wish all good to them; it is charity only that preserveth them: which more surely than any power or policy doth quash all war and strife;* for war must have parties, and strife implieth resistance: be it the first or second blow which maketh the fray, charity will avoid it; for it neither will strike the first in offence, nor the second in revenge. Charity therefore may well be styled *the bond of peace*,[m] it being that only which can knit men's souls together, and keep them from breaking out into dissensions.

It alone is that which will prevent bickering and clashing about points of credit or interest: if we love not our neighbour, or tender not his good as our own, we shall be ever in competition and debate with him about those things, not suffering him to enjoy any thing quietly; struggling to get above him, scrambling with him for what is to be had.

IX. (4.) As charity preserveth from mischiefs, so it procureth many sweet comforts and fair accommodations of life.

Friendship is a most useful and pleasant thing, and charity will conciliate good store thereof: it is apt to make all men friends; for love is the only general philter and effectual charm of souls; the fire which kindleth all it toucheth, and propagateth itself in every capable subject:† and such a subject is every man in whom humanity is not quite extinct; and hardly can any such man be, seeing every man hath some good humour in him, some blood, some kindly juice flow-

* Vincit malos pertinax bonitas.—*Sen.*

† Carbones ignis congregabis super caput ejus; non in maledictum et condemnationem, ut plerique existimant, sed in correctionem et pœnitudinem; ut superatus beneficiis, excoctus fervore charitatis, inimicus esse desistat.—*Hier. in Pelag.* i. cap. 9.

[j] 1 Pet. iii. 13,—Ἐὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μιμηταὶ γένησθε.
[j] Gen. xxxii. 20. [k] Gen. xxxiii. 4.

* Cadit statim simultas ab altera parte deserta.—*Sen. de Ir.* ii. 34.

† Ego tibi monstrabo amatorium sine medicamento, sine herba, sine ullius veneficæ carmine. Si vis amari, ama.—*Sen. Ep.* ix.

[l] 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17; xxvi. 17, 21.
[m] Eph. iv. 3.

ing in his veins; no man wholly doth consist of dusky melancholy, or fiery choler; whence all men may be presumed liable to the powerful impressions of charity: its mild and serene countenance, its sweet and gentle speech, its courteous and obliging gesture, its fair dealing, its benign conversation, its readiness to do any good or service to any man, will insinuate good-will and respect into all hearts.

It thence will encompass a man with friends, with many guards of his safety, with many supports of his fortune, with many patrons of his reputation, with many succourers of his necessity, with many comforters of his affliction: for is a charitable man in danger, who will not defend him? is he falling, who will not uphold him? is he falsely accused or aspersed, who will not vindicate him? is he in distress, who will not pity him? who will not endeavour to relieve and restore him? who will insult over his calamity? will it not in such cases appear a common duty, a common interest, to assist and countenance a common friend, a common benefactor to mankind?

Whereas most of our life is spent in society and discourse, charity is that which doth season and sweeten these, rendering them grateful to others, and commodious to one's self: for a charitable heart is a sweet spring, from whence do issue streams of wholesome and pleasant discourse;[a] it not being troubled with any bad passion or design, which may sour or foul conversation, doth ever make him good company to others, and rendereth them such to himself; which is a mighty convenience. In short, *a* charitable man, or *true lover of men, will* (saith St. Chrysostom) *inhabit earth as a heaven, everywhere carrying a serenity with him, and plaiting ten thousand crowns for himself.* Again,*

X. (5.) Charity doth in every estate yield advantages suitable thereto; bettering it, and improving it to our benefit.

It rendereth prosperity not only innocent and safe, but useful and fruitful to us; we then indeed enjoy it, if we feel the comfort of doing good by it: it solaceth adversity, considering that it doth not arise as a punishment or fruit of ill-doing to others; that it is not attended with the deserved ill-will of men; that no man hath reason to delight for it, or insult over us therein; that we may probably expect commiseration and relief, having been ready to show the like to others.

It tempereth both states: for in prosperity a man cannot be transported with immoderate joy, when so many objects of pity and grief do present themselves before him, which he is apt deeply to resent; in adversity he cannot be dejected with extreme sorrow, being refreshed by so many good successes befalling those whom he loveth: one condition will not puff him up, being sensible of his neighbour's misery; the other will not sink him down, having complacence in his neighbour's welfare. Uncharitableness (proceeding from contrary causes, and producing contrary effects) doth spoil all conditions, rendering prosperity fruitless, and adversity comfortless.

XI. (6.) We may consider, that secluding the exercise of charity, all the goods and advantages we have (our best faculties of nature, our best endowments of soul, the gifts of Providence, and the fruits of our industry) will become vain and fruitless, or noxious and baneful to us: for what is our reason worth, what doth it signify, if it serveth only for contriving sorry designs, or transacting petty affairs about ourselves? what is wit good for, if it must be spent only in making sport, or hatching mischief? to what purpose is knowledge, if it be not applied to the instruction, direction, admonition, or consolation of others? what mattereth abundance of wealth, if it be to be uselessly hoarded up, or vainly flung away in wicked or wanton profuseness; if it be not employed in affording succour to our neighbour's indigency and distress? what is our credit but a mere noise or a puff of air, if we do not give a solidity and substance to it, by making it an engine of doing good? what is our virtue itself, if it be buried in obscurity or choked with idleness, yielding no benefit to others by the lustre of its example, or by its real influence?* what is any tallent, if it be wrapped up

* Τὴν γὴν οὕτως ὡς τὸν οὐρανὸν οἰκήσει, πανταχοῦ γαλήνης ἀπολαύων, καὶ μυρίους ἑαυτῷ πλέκων στεφάνους.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.

[a] Prov. xv. 26; xvi. 24.

* Paulum sepultæ distat inertiæ Celata virtus.—*Hor. Carm.* iv. 9.

in a napkin; any light, if it be hid under a bushel; any thing private, if it be not by good use spread out and improved to public benefit? If these gifts do minister only to our own particular advantage, to our personal convenience, glory, or pleasure, how slim things are they, how inconsiderable is their worth!

But they being managed by charity, become precious and excellent things; they are great in proportion to the greatness of their use, or the extent of their beneficial influence: as they carry forth good to the world, so they bring back various benefits to ourselves; they return into our bosom laden with respect and reward from God and from man;[o] they yield thanks and commendation from without, they work comfort and satisfaction within: yea, which is infinitely more considerable, and enhanceth the price of our gifts to a vast rate, they procure glory and blessing to God; for *hereby is God glorified, if we bring forth much fruit:* and no good fruit can grow from any other stock than that of charity.[p]

Uncharitableness, therefore, should be loathed and shunned by us, as that which robbeth us of all our ornaments and advantages; which indeed marreth and corrupteth all our good things; which turneth blessings into curses, and rendereth the means of our welfare to be causes of mischief to us: for without charity, a man can have no goods but goods worldly and temporal; and such goods thence do prove impertinent baubles, burdensome encumbrances, dangerous snares, baneful poisons to him.

XII. (7.) Charity doth hugely advance and amplify a man's state, putting him into the possession or fruition of all good things: it will endow, enrich, ennoble, embellish us with all the world hath of precious, of glorious, of fair; by appropriation thereof to ourselves, and acquiring of a real interest therein. What men commonly out of fond self-love do vainly affect, that infallibly by being charitable they may compass, the engrossing to themselves all kinds of good: most easily, most innocently, in a compendious and sure way, without any sin or blame, without any care or pain, without any danger or trouble, they may come to attain and to enjoy whatever in common esteem is desirable or valuable; they may, without greedy avarice, or the carkings, the drudgeries, the disgraces going with it, procure to themselves abundant wealth; without fond ambition, or the difficulties, the hazards, the emulations, the strugglings to which it is liable, they may arrive to great honour; without sordid voluptuousness, or the satieties, the maladies, the regrets consequent thereon, they may enjoy all pleasure; without any wildness or wantonness, pride, luxury, sloth, any of its temptations and snares, they may have all prosperity; they may get all learning and wisdom without laborious study, all virtue and goodness without the fatigues of continual exercise: for are not all these things yours, if you do esteem them so, if you do make them so by finding much delight and satisfaction in them? doth not your neighbour's wealth enrich you, if you feel content in his possessing and using it? doth not his preferment advance you, if your spirit riseth with it in a gladsome complacence? doth not his pleasure delight you, if you relish his enjoyment of it? doth not his prosperity bless you, if your heart doth exult and triumph in it? do not his endowments adorn you, if you like them, if you commend them, if the use of them doth minister comfort and joy to you? This is the divine magic of charity, which conveyeth all things into our hands, and instateth us in a dominion of them, whereof nothing can disseize us; by virtue whereof *being* (as St. Paul speaketh of himself) *sorrowful, we yet always rejoice; having nothing, we yet possess all things.*[q]

Neither is this property in things merely imaginary or fantastic (like that of lunatics, who fancy themselves mighty princes or rich aldermen), but very substantial and real; yea, far more real to the charitable person, than it is commonly to those who in legal or popular account are masters of them: for how is propriety in things otherwise considerable, than for the content and pleasure which they yield to the presumed owner? the which if a charitable person abundantly draweth from them, why are they not truly his? why is not the tree his, if he

[o] Luke vi. 38.

[p] John xv. 8; Phil. i. 11; Matt. v. 16; 2 Cor. ix. 11; 1 Cor. xiii.

[q] 2 Cor. vi. 10.

can pull and taste its fruits without injury or blame? yea, doth not the propriety more really belong to him as to the gross possessor, if he doth equally enjoy the benefit, without partaking the inconveniences and impurities adherent to them; if he taste them innocently and purely, without being cloyed, without being distracted, without being puffed, without being encumbered, ensnared, or corrupted by them?

A charitable man therefore can never, in a moral account, be poor, or vile, or anywise miserable; except all the world should be cast into penury and distress: for while his neighbour hath any thing, he will enjoy it; *rejoicing with those that rejoice*, as the Apostle doth enjoin.

XIII. (8.) If, therefore, we love ourselves, we must love others, and do others good; charitable beneficence carrying with it so many advantages to ourselves.

We by charitable complacence do partake in their welfare, reaping pleasure from all the fruits of their industry and fortune.

We by charitable assistance do enable and dispose them to make grateful returns of succour in our need.

We thence assuredly shall obtain their good-will, their esteem, their commendation; we shall maintain peaceable and comfortable intercourse with them, in safety, in quiet, in good humour and cheer.

Besides all other benefits, we shall get that of their prayers; the which of all prayers have a most favourable audience and assured efficacy: for if the complaints and curses of those who are oppressed or neglected by uncharitable dealing do certainly reach God's ears, and pull down vengeance from above;[r] how much more will the intercessions and blessings of the poor pierce the heavens, and thence draw recompense! seeing God is more ready to perform his proper and pleasant works of bounty and mercy, than to execute his *strange* and unpleasing *work* of punishment;[s] especially the blessings of the poor being always accompanied with praises and glorifications of him, who enableth and disposeth men to do good; the which praises will ever be reckoned on the account of him who drew them forth by his beneficence: it will be, as the Apostle saith, *fruit redounding to his account*, while *it aboundeth by many thanksgivings to God*.[t]

So in virtue of Charity the poorest man amply may requite the wealthiest; and a peasant may outdo the greatest prince in beneficence.

XIV. We may consider, that charity is a practice specially grateful to God, and a most excellent part of our duty; not only because he hath commanded it as such with greatest earnestness; nor only because it doth constitute us in nearest semblance of him; but as a peculiar expression of love and good-will toward him: for if we love him, we must for his sake have a kindness for his friends, we must tender his interests, we must favour his reputation, we must desire his content and pleasure, we must contribute our endeavours toward the furtherance of these his concerns. Seeing, then, God is an assured friend to all men, seeing he hath a property in all men (for he is God and Lord of all), seeing he much concerneth himself for all men's welfare; seeing from the prosperity, from the virtue, from the happiness of every man, he gaineth honour and praise; seeing he is greatly satisfied and delighted in the good of men; we also must love them; otherwise we greatly shall disoblige and disgust him.[u]

Is it not indeed a practice guilty of notorious enmity toward him, inconsistent with the maintenance of any friendship or peace with him, to discord in affection from him, maligning or disaffecting those whom he dearly loveth and favoureth; who are so nearly allied to him by manifold relations, as his creatures, his subjects, his servants, his children, whom he designeth and desireth to crown with eternal glory and bliss?*

XV. Seeing God vouchsafeth to esteem whatever is done in charity to our neighbour (if done with an honest and pious mind, as to his friends) to be done unto

[r] James v. 4; Deut. xxiv. 15; Ecclus. iv. 6.
[s] Ps. lxii. 12; Mic. 7, 18; Isa. xxviii. 21.

* Ὅταν στυγῇ τις ἄνδρα, τὸν Θεὸς φιλεῖ, οὗτος μεγίστην μωρίαν κατεισάγει, φανερῶς γάρ αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ κορύσσεται.—Vid. Anthol.

Δεῖ γὰρ φιλεῖν ἐκεῖνον, ὃν Θεὸς φιλεῖ.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.

[t] Phil. iv. 17; 2 Cor. ix. 11; viii. 19.
[u] Ezek. xviii.

himself; that in feeding our indigent neighbour we refresh him; in clothing our neighbour we comfort him; we do by charitable beneficence oblige God, and become in a manner benefactors to him; and as such assuredly shall be requited by him: and is not this a high privilege, a great honour, a mighty advantage to us? If a man had opportunity to do that, which his prince would acknowledge a courtesy and obligation to him, what a happiness would he account it! and how far more considerable is it, that we can so easily do that which the Lord of all, in whose disposal all things are, will take so kindly at our hands!

XVI. We may consider, that charity is a very feasible and very easy duty; it requireth no sore pain, no grievous trouble, no great cost: for it consisteth only in good-will, and that which naturally springeth thence; willingness and cheerfulness are necessary ingredients or adjuncts of it;[v] the which imply facility:* whence the weakest and poorest man is no less able to perform it than the greatest potentate; his heart may be as charitable, though his hand cannot be so liberal: one of the most noble and most famous charities that ever was, was the giving two mites;[w] and the *giving a cup of cold water*[x] is the instance of that beneficence, which shall not fail of being rewarded.†

XVII. We may consider that charity is the best, the most assured, the most easy and expedite way or instrument of performing all other duties toward our neighbour: if we would despatch, love, and all is done; if we would be perfect in obedience, love, and we shall not fail in any point; for *love is the fulfilling of the law;* love *is the bond of perfectness:*[y] would we be secure in the practice of justice, of meekness, of humility toward all men, of constant fidelity toward our friends, of gentle moderation toward our enemies, of loyalty toward our superiors, of benignity toward our inferiors; if we would be sure to purify our minds from ill thoughts, to restrain our tongues from ill speaking, to abstain from all bad demeanour and dealing; it is but having charity, and infallibly you will do all this: for *love worketh no ill to its neighbour; love thinketh no evil; love behaveth not itself unseemly.*[z]

Would we discharge all our duties without any reluctancy or regret, with much satisfaction and pleasure? love will certainly dispose us thereto; for it always acteth freely and cheerfully, without any compulsion or straining;* it is ever accompanied with delectation:† if we would know its way and virtue of acting, we may see it represented in the proceeding of Jacob, who being inspired by love, did contentedly and without regret endure so long and hard toil, such disappointments and such affronts: *And Jacob* (saith the text) *served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her.*[a]

This is the root, from whence voluntary obedience doth naturally grow; if it be planted in our heart, we need not fear but that all kind of good fruit will sprout forth into conversation and practice.‡

But without it we shall not ever perform any good work perfectly, steadily, in a kindly manner: no other principle will serve; if we are only moved by whip and spur, driven on by fear, or incited by hope, we shall go forward unwillingly and dully, often halting, ever flagging: those principles which do put slaves and mercenaries on action, as they are not so noble and worthy, so neither are they so effectual and sure; as ambition, vain-glory, self-interest, design of security, of profit, of compliance with the expectation of men, &c.

* Ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη μετὰ τοῦ κέρδους πολλὴν ἔχει καὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν, καὶ πόνον οὐδένα.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.

Ποῖος πόνος μὴ κακῶς εἰπεῖν οὐδένα; ποία δυσκολία ἀπαλλαγῆναι φθόνου καὶ βασκανίας; ποῖος μόχθος μὴ κακῶς εἰπεῖν μηδένα; Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ἡ.

† At nunc cum omnia quæ difficiliora sunt vel modica ex parte faciamus, hoc solum non facimus quod et facilius est, et absque quo cassa sunt universa quæ facimus: jejunii corpus sentit injuriam, vigiliæ carnem macerant—hæc omnia sunt qui faciant, sola charitas sine labore est.—*Hier in Gal.* v. 13.

[v] Rom. xii. 8; 2 Cor. ix. 7; viii. 12.
[w] Luke xxi. 2. [x] Matt. x. 42.
[y] Rom. xiii. 10; Gal. v. 14

* It is winged.—It is fire.

† Εἰ γὰρ ἅπαντες ἠγάπων καὶ ἠγαπῶντο, οὐδὲν ἂν ἠδίκησεν οὐδείς, &c.—Chrys. in Cor. Or. xxxii.

Amor obsequitur sponte, gratis obtemperat, libere reveretur.—*Bern. ad Eug. Prol.*—Vid. Bern. Ep. xi. p. 1404.

‡ Ὁ γὰρ φιλῶν οὐχ οὕτως ἐπιτάττων, ὡς ἐπιτατόμενος χαίρει, &c.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.

[z] Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xiii. 5.
[a] Gen. xxix 20.

XVIII. Charity giveth worth, form, and life, to all virtue, so that without it no action is valuable in itself, or acceptable to God.[b]

Sever it from courage; and what is that, but the boldness or fierceness of a beast? from meekness; and what is that, but the softness of a woman, or weakness of a child? from courtesy; and what is that, but affectation or artifice? from justice; what is that, but humour or policy? from wisdom; what is that, but craft and subtilty?

What meaneth faith without it, but dry opinion; what hope, but blind presumption; what alms-doing, but ambitious ostentation; what undergoing martyrdom, but stiffness or sturdiness of resolution; what is devotion, but glozing or mocking with God? what is any practice, how specious soever in appearance, or materially good, but an issue of self-conceit or self-will, of servile fear or mercenary design? *Though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*[c]

But charity doth sanctify every action, and impregnate all our practice with a savour of goodness, turning all we do into virtue; it is true fortitude and gallantry indeed, when a man out of charity and hearty design to promote his neighbour's good, doth encounter dangers and difficulties; it is genuine meekness, when a man out of charity, and unwillingness to hurt his neighbour, doth patiently comport with injuries and discourtesies; it is virtuous courtesy, when cordial affection venteth itself in civil language, in respectful deportment, in obliging performances; it is excellent justice, when a man, regarding his neighbour's case as his own, doth unto him as he would have it done to himself; it is admirable wisdom, which sagaciously contriveth and dexterously manageth things with the best advantage toward its neighbour's good; it is a worthy faith, which being *spirited* and *actuated* by charity, doth produce goodly fruits of beneficence;[d] it is a sound and solid hope, which is grounded on that everlasting foundation of charity, which *never doth fail*, or fall away;[e] it is sincere alms, which not only the hand, but the heart doth reach forth; it is an acceptable sacrifice, which is kindled by the holy fire of fervent affection; it is a pure devotion, which is offered up with a calm and benign mind, resembling the disposition of that goodness which it adoreth.[f]

If therefore we would do any thing well, if we would not lose all the virtue, and forfeit all the benefit of what we perform, we must follow the rule of St. Paul, *to do all our works in charity.*[g]

XIX. So great benefits doth charity yield; yet it did not yield any of them, it would deserve and claim our observance: without regard to its sweet fruits and beneficial consequences, it were to be embraced and cherished; for it carrieth a reward and a heaven in itself; the very same which constituteth God himself infinitely happy, and which beatifieth every blessed spirit, in proportion to its capacity and exercise thereof; a man doth abundantly enjoy himself in that steady composedness, and savoury complacence of mind, which ever doth attend it; and as the present sense, so is the memory of it, or the good conscience of having done good, very delicious and satisfactory.

As it is a rascally delight (tempered with regret, and vanishing into bitterness) which men feel in wreaking spite, or doing mischief; such as they cannot reflect upon without disgust and condemning their base impotency of soul: so is the pleasure which charity doth breed altogether pure, grateful to the mind, and increasing by reflection; never perishing or decaying; a man eternally enjoying the good he hath done by remembering and ruminating thereon. In fine,

XX. Whereas the great obstacle to charity is self-love, or an extravagant fondness of our own interests, yet uncharitableness destroyeth that: for how can we love ourselves, if we do want charity? how can we appear lovely to ourselves, if we are destitute of so worthy an endowment? or if we can discern those unworthy dispositions, which accompany

[b] Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv.
[c] 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.
[d] Gal. v. 6; James ii. 26.
[e] 1 Cor. xiii. 8.
[f] 1 Tim. ii. 8; Matt. v. 23.
[g] 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

the defect of it; can we esteem so mean, so vile, so ugly things as we then are? Aristotle saith, that bad men cannot be friends to themselves, because *having in themselves nothing amiable, they can feel no affection toward themselves;** and certainly, if we are not stark blind, or can but see wrath, spite, envy, revenge, in their own black and ugly hue, we must needs (if they do possess our souls) grow odious and despicable to ourselves. And seeing they do rob us of so many great benefits, and bring so many grievous mischiefs on us, we cannot be otherwise than enemies to ourselves by cherishing them, or suffering them to lodge in us.

These are some very considerable inducements to the practice of this great virtue; there are divers others of a higher nature, derivable from the inmost bowels of our religion, grounded on its peculiar constitution and obligations, which I shall now forbear to mention, reserving them for a particular discourse by themselves.

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake.[h]

SERMON XXIX.

OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

ROM. xii. 18.—*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

THIS chapter containeth many excellent precepts and wholesome advices (scarce any portion of holy Scripture so many in so little compass.) From among them I have selected one, alas, but too seasonable and pertinent to the unhappy condition of our distracted age, wherein to observe this and such like injunctions, is by many esteemed an impossibility, by others a wonder, by some a crime. It hath an apt coherence with, yet no necessary dependence upon, the parts adjoining; whence I may presume to treat upon it distinctly by itself: and without further preface or circumstance we may consider several particulars therein.

I. And first, concerning the advice itself, or the substance of the duty charged on us, εἰρηνεύειν (*to be in peace*, or *live peaceably*), we may take notice that whether, according to the more usual acceptation, it be applied to the public estate of things, or, as here, doth relate only to private conversation, it doth import,—

1. Not barely a negation of doing or suffering harm, or an abstinence from strife and violence (for a mere strangeness this may be a want of occasion, or a truce, rather than a peace), but a positive amity, and disposition to perform such kind offices, without which good correspondence among men cannot subsist. For they who by reason of distance of place, non-acquaintance, or defect of opportunity, maintain no intercourse, cannot properly be said to be in peace with one another: but those who have frequent occasion of commerce, whose conditions require interchanges of courtesy and relief, who are some way obliged and disposed to afford needful succour, and safe retreat to each other; these may be said to live in peace together, and these only, it being in a manner impossible that they who are not disposed to do good to others (if they have power and opportunity) should long abstain from doing harm.

2. Living peaceably implies not some few transitory performances, proceeding from casual humour, or the like; but a constant, stable, and well-settled condition of being; a continual cessation from injury, and promptitude to do good offices. For as one blow doth not make a battle, nor one skirmish a war; so cannot single forbearances from doing mischief, or some few particular acts of kindness (such as mere strangers may afford each other), be worthily styled a being in peace; but an habitual inclination to these, a firm and durable estate of innocence and beneficence.

3. Living in peace supposes a reciprocal condition of being; not only a performing good, and forbearing to do bad offices, but a receiving the like treatment from

* Οὐθὲν φιλητὸν ἔχοντες, οὐθὲν φιλικὸν πάσχουσι. —Arist. Eth. ix. 4.

[h] Quinquagesima Sunday.

others. For he, that being assaulted is constrained to stand upon his defence, may not be said to be in peace, though his not being so (involuntarily) is not to be imputed to him.

4. Being in peace imports not only an outward cessation of violence, and seeming demonstration of amity, but an inward will and resolution to continue therein. For he that intends, when occasion is presented, to do mischief to another, is nevertheless an enemy, because more secret and dangerous: an ambuscado is no less a piece of war, than confronting the enemy in open field. Proclaiming and denouncing signify, but good and ill intention constitute, and are the souls of peace and war. From these considerations we may infer a description of being in peace, viz. that it is, to bear mutual good-will, to continue in amity, to maintain good correspondence, to be upon terms of mutual courtesy and benevolence; to be disposed to perform reciprocally all offices of humanity; assistance in need, comfort in sorrow, relief in distress; to please and satisfy one another, by advancing the innocent delight, and promoting the just advantage of each other; to converse with confidence and security, without suspicion, on either hand, of any fraudulent, malicious, or hurtful practices against either: or, negatively, not to be in a state of enmity, personal hatred, pertinacious anger, jealousy, envy, or ill-will; not to be apt to provoke, to reproach, to harm or hinder another, nor to have reasonable grounds of expecting the same bad usage from others; to be removed from danger of vexatious quarrels, intercourse of odious language, offending others, or being disquieted one's self. This I take to be the meaning of living or being in peace, differing only in degree of obligation, and latitude of object, from the state of friendship properly so called, and opposed to a condition of enmity, defiance, contention, hatred, suspicion, animosity.

II. In the next place we may consider the object of this duty, signified in those words, *with all men*. We often meet in scripture with exhortations directed peculiarly to Christians, to be at peace among themselves: as (Mark ix. 5) our Saviour lays this injunction upon his disciples, εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις, *Have peace one with another;* inculcated by St. Paul upon the Thessalonians in the same words:[a] and the like we have in the second Epistle to Timothy, chap. ii. ver. 22; *Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart:* and to the Romans (xiv. 19;) *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*[b] But here the duty hath a more large and comprehensive object; πάντες ἄνθρωποι, *all men:* as likewise it hath in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 14, *Pursue peace with all men:* with all men, without any exception; with men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians; of all sects and religions, persecuting Jews and idolatrous heathens (for of such consisted the generality of men at that time;) and so St. Paul expressly in a like advice (1 Cor. x. 32, 33), *Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; even as I please all men.* And I may add, by evident parity of reason, with men of all degrees and estates, high and low, noble and base, rich and poor; of all tempers and dispositions, meek and angry, gentle and froward, pliable and perverse; of all endowments, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious; of all judgments and persuasions, orthodox and heretical, peaceable and schismatical persons: this univerally vast and boundless term, *all men*, contains them all. Neither is there any evading our obligation to this duty, by pretending about others, that they differ from us in humour and complexion of soul, that they entertain opinions irreconcilably contrary to ours; that they adhere to sects and parties which we dislike and disavow; that they are not so virtuous, so religious, so holy as they should be, or at least not in such a manner as we would have them; for be this allegation true or false, it will not excuse us: while they are not divested of human nature, and can truly lay claim to the name and title of men, we are by virtue of this precept obliged to live peaceably with them.

III. We may consider the qualification of the duty here expressed, and what those words mean, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you.* To which purpose

[a] 1 Thess. v. 13. [b] *Vide* Eph. iv. 3.

we may advert, from our description of living peaceably, that it consists mainly of two parts: one *active*, or proceeding from us, and terminated on others—to bear good-will, to do good offices, to procure the profit, delight, and welfare, to abstain from the displeasure, damage, and disturbance of others: the other *passive*, issuing from others, and terminated on ourselves—that they be well affected towards us, inclinable to do us good, and nowise disposed to wish, design, or bring any harm, trouble, or vexation upon us. Whereof the former is altogether in our power, consisting of acts or omissions, depending upon our free choice and counsel: and we are directly obliged to it, by virtue of those words, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, *as much as lieth in you:* the latter is not fully so, yet commonly there be probable means of effecting it, which we are hence bound to use, though sometimes they may fail of success. For the words εἰ δυνατὸν, *if it be possible*, as they signify the utmost endeavour is to be employed, and that no difficulty (beneath the degree of impossibility) can discharge us from it; so they intimate plainly, that sometime our labour may be lost, and our purpose defeated; and that by the default of others it may be impossible we should arrive to a peaceable condition of life with all men. However, by this rule we are directed not only ourselves not to infringe the terms of peace toward others, but to endeavour earnestly by all honest and prudent means to obtain the good-will, favour, and respect of others, by which they may be disposed to all friendly correspondence with us, and not to disturb the quiet and tranquillity of our lives.

Having thus by way of explication superficially glanced upon the words, we will proceed to a more large and punctual review of them; and shall consider more distinctly the particulars grossly mentioned: and,

1. What those especial duties are, included in this more comprehensive one of living peaceably with all men; both those which are directly required of us, as the necessary causes or immediate results of a peaceable disposition in us towards others; and also those which are to be performed by us, as just and reasonable means conducible to beget or preserve in others a peaceable inclination toward us: these I shall consider promiscously; and,

1. We are by this precept directly obliged heartily to love, that is, to bear goodwill to, to wish well to, to rejoice in the welfare, and commiserate the adversities, of all men: at least not to hate, or bear ill-will to, to desire or design the harm, to repine at the happy success, or delight in the misfortunes of any: for as it is very hard to maintain peace and amicable correspondence with those we do not truly love; so it is absolutely impossible to do it long with those we hate: this satanic passion (or disposition of soul) always prompting the mind possessed therewith to the contrivance and execution of mischief; whence he that hates his brother is said to be a murderer, as having in him that bitter root, from whence, if power and occasion conspire, will probably spring that most extreme of outrages, and capital breach of peace.[c] Love is the only sure cement that knits and combines men in friendly society; and hatred the certain fountain of that violence which rends and dissolves it. We cannot easily hurt or strive with those we love and wish well to: we cannot possibly long agree with those we hate and malign. Peace without love can be esteemed little more than politic dissimulation; and peace with hatred is really nothing less than an artificial disguise, or an insidious covert of enmity.

2. We are hence obliged to perform all kind offices of humanity, which the condition of any man can require, and may by us be performed without considerable inconvenience or detriment to ourselves or others. When, for the preservation or comfortable accommodation of life, they need our help or our advice, we are readily to afford them; when they are in want or distress, we are to minister to them what comfort and relief we can. We are, upon this very score, to obey that injunction of St. Paul to the Galatians, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.*[d] For without this beneficence, a man's carriage (though otherwise harmless and inoffensive) appears rather a suspicious strangeness, than a peaceable demeanour, and naturally produces an enmity in those that are concerned in it.

[c] 1 John iii. 15. [d] Gal. vi. 10.

For he to whom, being pressed with necessity, requisite assistance is denied, will infallibly be apt to think himself not only neglected and disesteemed, but affronted also, and injured; (need, in the general conceit of men, and especially of those that feel it, begetteth a kind of title to some competent relief;) and consequently will heinously resent, and complain bitterly of such supposed wrong; and, if ever he become able, repay it with advantage. And much more are we upon the same account not to perform ill offices toward any man; not to disturb him in the enjoyment of his innocent pleasure, nor to hinder him in the advancing his lawful profit, nor to interrupt him in the prosecution of his reasonable designs; nor anywise to vex and grieve him needlessly; and (above all) not to detain him in, nor to aggravate his afflictions. For these are actual violations of peace, and impediments of good correspondence among men. Further,

3. In this duty of living peaceably is included an obligation to all kind of just and honest dealing with all men; punctually to observe contracts, impartially to decide controversies, equally to distribute rewards, to injure no man either in his estate, by violent or fraudulent encroachments upon his just possessions; or in his reputation, by raising or dispersing slanderous reports concerning him: for these courses of all others are most destructive to peace, and upon the pretence of them, most quarrels that ever were have been commenced.

Justice in its own nature is, and by the common agreement of men hath been designed, the guardian of peace and sovereign remedy of contention. But not to insist long upon such obvious subjects,

4. It much conduceth to the preservation of peace, and upholding amicable correspondence in our dealings and transactions with men liable to doubt and debate, not to insist upon nice and rigorous points of right, not to take all advantage offered us, not to deal hard measure, not to use extremities, to the damage or hinderance of others, especially when no comparable benefit will thence accrue to ourselves. For such proceedings, as they discover in us little kindness to, or tenderness of our neighbour's good, so they exceedingly exasperate them, and persuade them we are their enemies, and render them ours, and so utterly destroy peace between us.[e] Whenas abating something from the height and strictness of our pretences, and a favourable cession in such cases, will greatly engage men to have an honourable opinion and a peaceable affection toward us.

5. If we would attain to this peaceable estate of life, we must use toward all men such demonstrations of respect and courtesy, which according to their degree and station custom doth entitle them to, or which upon the common score of humanity they may be reasonably deemed to expect from us; respectful gestures, civil salutations, free access, affable demeanour, cheerful looks, and courteous discourse. These, as they betoken goodwill in them that use them, so they beget, cherish, and increase it in those whom they refer to: and the necessary fruit of mutual good-will is peace. But the contrary carriages, contemptuous or disregardful behaviour, difficulty of admission to converse, a tetrical or sullen aspect, rough and fastidious language, as they discover a mind averse from friendly commerce, so they beget a more potent disdain in others: men generally (especially those of generous and hearty temper) valuing their due respect beyond all other interests, and more contentedly brooking injury than neglect. Whence this skill and dexterity of deportment (though immediately, and in its own nature, of no great worth, and regulating actions of small importance, gestures, looks, and forms of speech), yet because it is a nurse of peace, and greatly contributes to the delightfulness of society, hath been always much commended, and hath obtained a conspicuous place in the honourable rank of virtues, under the titles of courtesy, comity, and affability; and the opposites thereto, rudeness and rusticity, have been deservedly counted and called vices in morality.

6. This precept directly prohibits the use of all reproachful, scornful, and provoking language; these being the immediate result of enmity, and actual breaches of peace. Whence St. Paul conjoins, *Μηδένα βλασφημεῖν* and *ἀμάχους εἶναι*, *To speak evil of no man, to be no quarrellers*

[e] *Vide* Tit. iii. 2,—*ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπιεικεῖς.*

(or fighters), *but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.*[f] For war is managed (and that with more deadly animosity) with the tongue, as well as with the hand. (*There is that speaketh like the piercing of a sword*, saith Solomon; and *whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword*, saith David.[g]) Words are with more anguish felt than blows; their wounds are more incurable, and they leave a deeper scar.* Men usually dread more the loss of their honour than their lives, and take more grievously the ravishing of their credit than the depredation of their estate. Living peaceably, therefore, implies as much abstaining from opprobrious words as injurious actions: yea more; for reviling is not only a violation of peace, but a dishonourable waging of war; like shooting arrows dipt in poison, and discharging slugs against our neighbour's reputation:† practices condemned by all as base and inhuman, and contrary to the laws of a noble warfare; being arguments, we affect rather our adversary's utter ruin, than a gallant victory over him. There be fair ways of disputing our cause, without contumelious reflections upon persons; and the errors of men may be sufficiently refuted without satirical virulency. One good reason, modestly propounded, hath in it naturally more power and efficacy to convince him that is in a mistake, or to confound him with shame that is guilty of a fault, than ten thousand scoffs and ignominious taunts. When we are to express those deeds of nature (the performance of which is concealed, as containing in it something of supposed turpitude), we are wont to veil them in such modest circumlocutions, that by the hearers without offence to their bashfulness may sufficiently be understood.‡ So when it is needful or expedient to confute the opinions or reprove the actions of men, if we either charitably design their amendment, or desire to maintain peaceable correspondence with them, it behoves that we do not, by using the most broad and distasteful language, immoderately trespass upon their modesty and patience that (to use Seneca's phrase) we do *agere curam non tantum salutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis;* De Clem. i. c. 17: *have a care not only to cure the wound, but to leave a comely scar*, and not to deform him whom we endeavour to reform; for no sore is the easilier cured for being roughly handled, and least of all those in manners and opinion. A soft hand, and a tender heart, and a gentle tongue, are most convenient qualities of a spiritual chirurgeon.[h] But further to this purpose,

7. If we desire to live peaceably with all men, we are to be equal in censuring men's actions, candid in interpreting their meanings, mild in reprehending, and sparing to relate their miscarriages, to derive their actions from the best principles (from which, in the judgment of charity, they may be supposed to proceed, as from casual mistake rather than from wilful prejudice, from human infirmity rather than from malicious design), to construe ambiguous expressions to the most favourable sense they may admit; not to condemn men's practices, without distinct knowledge of the case, and examining the reasons, which possibly may absolve or excuse them: to extenuate their acknowledged faults by such circumstances as aptly serve that purpose, and not to exaggerate them by strained consequences, or uncertain conjectures: to rebuke them (if need be) so as they may perceive we sincerely pity their errors, and tender their good, and wish nothing more than their recovery, and do not design to upbraid, deride, or insult over them, being fallen;[i] and finally, not to recount their misdeeds over-frequently, unseasonably, and with complacence. He that thus demeaneth himself, manifestly showeth himself to prize his neighbour's good-will, and to be desirous to continue in amity with him; and assuredly obliges him to be in the same manner affected toward him. But he that is rigidly severe and censorious in his judgments, blaming in them things indifferent, condemning actions allowable, detracting from qualities commendable, de-

* Ποταπὸν δὲ χρῆμα λοιδορία; ὡς θυμοδακὴς ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἀμύττον ψυχὴν μᾶλλον ἢ σιδηρὸς χρῶτα — Jul. 2. Orat.

† Ζῆλος γὰρ συγγνώμης ἀπεστερημένος οὐ ζῆλος, ἀλλὰ θυμὸς μᾶλλόν ἐστιν, καὶ νοσοῦσία φιλανθρωπίαν οὐκ ἔχουσα, βασκανία τις εἶναι δεκεῖ.—Chrys. tom. v. p. 32.

‡ *Vide* egregium Antonini locum, lib. xi. § 18, 9.—ἀδήκτως.

[f] Tit. iii. 2.

[g] Prov. xii. 18; Psal. lvii. 4; lxiv. 3; Prov. xviii. 8.

[h] Prov. xv. 1.

[i] Prov. xvii. 9.

ducing men's doings from the worst causes, and imputing them to the worst ends, and representing them under the most odious appellations; that calls all impositions of superiors which he dislikes, tyranny, and all manners of divine worship that suit not to his fancy, superstition, and all pretences to conscience in those that dissent from him, hypocrisy, and all opinions different from his, heresy; that is suspicious of ill intention without sufficient ground, and prejudicates men's meanings before he well apprehends them, and captiously perverts sayings capable of good construction; that is curiously inquisitive into his neighbour's life, and gladly observes failings therein, and upon all occasions recites stories to his disgrace and disadvantage; that is immoderately bitter, fierce, and vehement, in accusing and inveighing against others, painting such as he assumes to impugn, with the blackest colours, in the most horrid shape and ugly dress, converting all matter of discourse (though never so unseasonably and impertinently) into declamation, and therein copiously expatiating:* in fine, employing his utmost might of wit and eloquence and confidence, in rendering them to others as hateful as he signifies they are to himself: such men, what do they else but loudly proclaim that they despise their neighbour's good-will, purposely provoke his anger, and defy his utmost enmity? For it is impossible such dealing should not, by them who are therein concerned, be accounted extremely unjust, and to proceed from desperate hatred.

8. He that would effectually observe this apostolic rule, must be disposed to overlook such lesser faults committed against him as make no great breach upon his interest or credit; yea, to forget or forgive the greatest and most grievous injuries; to excuse the mistakes, and connive at the neglects, and bear patiently the hasty passions of his neighbour, and to embrace readily any seasonable overture, and accept any tolerable conditions of reconcilement.† For even in common life that observation of our Saviour most exactly holds, *It is impossible that offences should not come;* the air may sooner become wholly fixed, and the sea continue in a perfect rest, without waves or undulations, than human conversation be altogether free from occasions of distaste, which he that cannot either prudently dissemble, or patiently digest, must renounce all hopes of living peaceably here. He that like tinder is inflammable by the least spark, and is enraged by every angry word, and resents deeply every petty affront, and cannot endure the memory of a past unkindness should upon any terms be defaced, resolves surely to live in eternal tumult and combustion, to multiply daily upon himself fresh quarrels, and to perpetuate all enmity already begun. Whenas by total passing by those little causes of disgust, the present contention is altogether avoided, or instantly appeased, our neighbour's passion suddenly evaporates and consumes itself; no remarkable footsteps of dissension remain; our neighbour, reflecting upon what is past, sees himself obliged by our discreet forbearance, however all possible means are used to prevent trouble and preserve peace. To this purpose, *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression*, saith Solomon: and, *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love*, saith the same wise prince.[j] But further,

9. If we would live peaceably with all men, we must not over-highly value ourselves, nor over-eagerly pursue our own things. We must not admire our own endowments, nor insist upon our deserts; for this will make us apt to depreciate others, and them to loathe us. We must not be over tender of our credit, and covetous of respect; for this will render us apt to take exceptions, and engage us in troublesome competitions for superiority of place, and pre-eminence in the vain opinions of men. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:* and, *Only* (i. e. chiefly) *from pride cometh contention*, saith Solomon.[k] We must not be much addicted to our own interests, for this

* That flies like a vulture to carrion only — *Plut. de Util.* cap. ex. Inim. Prov. xvii. 9; xxiv. 17.

† *Sen. Ben.* vii. 31. Vincit malos pertinax bonitas. Νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν. — Rom. xii. 21.

Irascitur aliquis? tu contra beneficiis provoca: cadit statim simultas ab altera parte deserta; nisi par non pugnat: si utrinque certabitur, ille est melior, qui prior pedem retulit; victus est qui vicit.—*Sen. de Ira.* ii. 34.

[j] Prov. xix. 11; xvii. 9.

[k] Prov. xxviii. 25; xiii. 10.

will dispose us to encroach upon the concernments of others, and them to resist our attempts, whence conflict and enmity will necessarily arise. We must not prefer our own judgments, and imperiously obtrude them upon others; nor be pertinacious in persuading them to embrace our private opinions, nor violently urgent to a compliance with our humour. For these things are intolerably fastidious in conversation, and obnoxious to be charged with usurpation and iniquity; all men naturally challenging to themselves an equal, or at least a proportionable share of reason, together with the free conduct of their lives, uncontrollable by private dictates. If therefore we desire to live quietly, and not needlessly to disoblige or displease others, we should be modest in esteeming our own abilities, and moderate in pursuing our own advantages, and in our converse not less complacent to others than we desire they should be to us; and as liberal in allowing leave to dissent from us, as we are bold in taking freedom to abound in our own sense. And if in debate a modest declaration of our opinion, and the reasons inducing us thereto, will not prevail, it behoves us to give over such a successless combat, and to retire into the silent enjoyment of our own thoughts. From not observing which rule, discourse grows into contention, and contention improves into feud and enmity.

10. If we would live peaceably, it concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions either merely vain and frivolous, of little use or concernment, or over nice and subtile, and thence indeterminable by reason; or that are agitated with extraordinary eagerness and heat of passion; or such as are already defined by general consent; or such upon the decision of which the public peace and safety do depend. There are some controversies prickly, like brambles, and apt to scratch those that handle them, but yielding no savoury or wholesome fruit: such as concern the consequences of imaginary suppositions, the state and circumstances of beings to us unknown, the right application of artificial terms, and the like impertinent matters; which serve to no other purpose but the exercise of curious wits, and exciting emulation among them. Others there be concerning matters of more weighty moment, yet having the resolution depending upon secrets unsearchable, or the interpretation of ambiguous words and obscure phrases, or upon some other uncertain conjectures; and are yet rendered more difficult by being entangled with inextricable folds of subtilty, nice distinctions, and crafty evasions, devised by the parties engaged in them for the maintenance of their causes respectively;* whence it hath happened, though with immense care and diligence of both parts they have been long canvassed, that yet they do, and in all probability will for ever remain undecided. So that now to engage in contest about them may be reasonably deemed nothing more than a wilful mispense of our time, labour, and good humour, by vainly reciprocating the saw of endless contention. Other questions there be, in themselves of more easy resolution, and of considerable importance, which yet by extreme opposition of parties are so clouded and overgrown with insuperable prejudices, that the disputing them is seldom attended with other success than an inflaming ourselves and others with passion. Others are by small and obscure parties managed against the common consent, and against the positive decrees of the most venerable authorities among men, by ventilating which, as truth is like to gain little, so peace is sure to suffer much. For as it is nowise a safe or advised course (except in case of necessary defence) to subject received opinions to the hazardous trial of a tumultuary conflict, their credit being better upheld by a stately reservedness than by a popular forwardness of discourse; as buildings stand fastest that are never shaken, and those possessions remain most secure that are never called in question: so, on the other hand, to countenance new and uncouth paradoxes, as it argues too much arrogance and presumption in confronting our single apprehensions against the deliberate sense and suffrage of so many men, yea, so many ages of men; and is likely to prove a successless attempt, like swimming against the current, accompanied with much toil and little progress; so it serves no good end, but only foments di-

* Non amplius inveniri licet quam quod a Deo discitur.—*Tertull. de Anim.* cap. 2.

visons, and disturbs both our private and the public peace. But most of all we are to be cautelous of meddling with controversies of dangerous consequence, wherein the public weal and quiet are concerned, which bare the roots of sacred authority, and prostitute the mysteries of government to vulgar inspection. Such points ought to be subjects of law, not of syllogism, and the errors in them to be corrected by punishment, rather than confuted by argument: neither can it be thought reasonable that the interest of public peace should depend upon the event of private disputation.* It concerns us, therefore, if we would live peaceably in such disputable matters, reserving all due reverence to the judgments of the most, the best and wisest persons, to be content in a modest privacy, to enjoy the results of a serious and impartial disquisition, patiently enduring others to dissent from us, and not attempting by needless, fruitless, and endless contentions, to gain others to our persuasions; especially since the truth contended for may not be worth the passion employed upon it, and the benefits of the victory not countervail the prejudices sustained in the combat. For goodness and virtue may often consist with ignorance and error, seldom with strife and discord. And this consideration I shall conclude with those exhortations of St. Paul, Tit. iii. 9: *But foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and law-contests, decline; for they are unprofitable and vain.* And in 2 Ep. to Tim. ii. 23—25: *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they gender strifes; and the servant of the Lord* (that is, a minister of religion) *must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that are contrarily disposed.*† And in the same chapter, ver. 14: *Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers:* of so pernicious consequence did St. Paul esteem unnecessary wrangling and disputing to be. But further,

11. If we desire to live peaceably, we must restrain our pragmatical curiosity within the bounds of our proper business and concernment, not [being *curiosi in aliena republ.*] invading other men's provinces, and without leave or commission intermeddling with their affairs;* not rushing into their closets, prying into their concealed designs, or dictating counsel to them without due invitation thereto; not controlling their actions, nor subjecting their proceedings to our censure, without competent authority. For these courses men usually look upon as rash intrusions, both injurious and reproachful to them, usurping upon that freedom of choice which all men passionately affect to preserve entire to themselves, and arguing them of weakness and incapacity to manage their own business: neither do men more naturally drive away flies that buzz about their ears, and molest them in their employments, than they with disdain repel such immodest and unseasonable meddlers in their affairs. Let no man suffer, saith St. Peter, *as a busy body in other men's matters:*[k] intimating, that those who are impertinently inquisitive into other men's matters, make themselves liable to suffer (and that deservedly) for their fond curiosity and bold presumption. And, *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears,*[l] saith Solomon; that is, he catcheth at that which he cannot hold, and vainly aims at that which he cannot effect, and rashly irritates those which will turn upon him and bite him. If, therefore, we would neither molest others, nor be disquieted ourselves, we must be like natural agents, never working aught beyond our proper sphere of activity. But especially, if we desire to live peaceably, we must beware of assuming to ourselves a liberty to censure the designs, decrees, or transactions of public authority, and of saying to our superiors, What doest thou? and much more, by querulous murmurings or clamorous declamations, of bringing envy and odium upon them. Few private men are capa-

* Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀποροῦντες πότερον δεῖ τοὺς θεοὺς τιμᾶν, καὶ τοὺς γονεῖς ἀγαπᾶν, ἢ οὔ, κολάσεως δέονται· οἱ δὲ πότερον ἡ χιὼν λευκὴ, ἢ οὔ, αἰσθήσεως.—Arist. Top. i. 8.

† Τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους.

* According to St. Paul's advice, 1 Thess. iv. 11, *Strive* (or be ambitious) *to be quiet, and to mind your own business.* (Φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια.)

[k] 1 Pet. iv. 15. [l] Prov. xxvi. 17.

ble of judging aright concerning those things, as being placed beneath in a valley, and wanting a due prospect upon the ground and causes of their proceedings who by reason of their eminent station can see more and further than they; and therefore are incompetent judges, and unjustly presume to interpose their sentence in such cases. But suppose the actions of superiors notoriously blameable and scandalous, and that by infallible arguments we are persuaded thereof; yet seeing neither the taxing of, nor complaint against them doth in any wise regularly belong to us, nor the discovery of our mind therein can probably be an efficacious means of procuring redress, and immediately tends to diminish the reputation and weaken the affection due to government, and consequently to impair the peaceable estate of things which by them is sustained, we are wholly to abstain from such unwarrantable, unprofitable, and turbulent practices; and with a submiss and discreet silence, passing over the miscarriages of our superiors, to wait patiently upon the providence, and implore the assistance of him, who is the only competent Judge of such, and sovereign Disposer of all things, who hath their hearts in his hands, and fashioneth them as he thinks good.[m] Further,

12. If we would live peaceably with all men, it behoves us not to engage ourselves so deeply in any singular friendship, or in devotion to one party of men, as to be entirely partial to their interests, and prejudiced in their behalf, without distinct consideration of the truth and equity of their pretences in the particular matters of difference; not to approve, favour, or applaud that which is bad in some; to dislike, discountenance, or disparage that which is good in others: not, out of excessive kindness to some, to give just cause of distaste to others: not, for the sake of a fortuitous agreement in disposition, opinion, interest, or relation, to violate the duties of justice or humanity. For he that upon such terms is a friend to any one man, or party of men, as to be resolved, with an implicit faith, or blind obedience, to maintain whatever he or they shall affirm to be true, and whatever they shall do to be good, doth in a manner undertake enmity against all men beside, and as it may happen, doth oblige himself to contradict plain truth, to deviate from the rules of virtue, and to offend Almighty God himself. This unlimited partiality we owe only to truth and goodness, and to God (the fountain of them), in no case to swerve from their dictates and prescriptions. He that followed Tiberius Gracchus in his seditious practices, upon the bare account of friendship, and alleged in his excuse, that, if his friend had required it of him, he should as readily have put fire to the Capitol, was much more abominable for his disloyalty to his country, and horrible impiety against God, than commendable for his constant fidelity to his friend.[n] And that soldier which is said to have told Cæsar (in his first expedition against Rome), that in obedience to his commands he would not refuse to sheathe his sword in the breast of his brother, or in the throat of his aged father, or in the bowels of his pregnant mother, was for his unnatural barbarity rather to be abhored, than to be esteemed for his loyal affection to his general.[o] And in like manner, he that, to please or gratify the humour of his friend, can be either injurious, or treacherous, or notably discourteous to any man else, is very blameable, and renders himself deservedly odious to all others.[p] Lælius, who incomparably well both understood and practised the rules of friendship, is by Cicero reported to have made this the first and chief law thereof: *Ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rogati: That we neither require of our friends the performance of base and naughty things; nor, being requested of them, perform such ourselves.*[n] And in the heraldry, or comparison of duties, as all others must give place to those of piety, verity, and virtue, so after them the duties of humanity justly challenge the next place of respect, even above those which belong to the highest degree of friendship (due to our nearest relations, yea, to our country itself), precisely taken, abstracted and distinguished from those of humanity. For

[m] Prov. xxi. 1; xxiii. 15.

[n] Cic. in Lælio.

[o] Luc. lib. i.

[p] Prov. xxiv. 24,—He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.

the world is in nature the first, the most comprehensive, and dearest country of us all; and our general obligations to mankind are more ancient, more fundamental, and more indispensable, than those particular ones superadded to, or superstructed on them. The peace therefore of the world, and the general welfare of men its citizens, ought to be more dear to us, and the means conducing thereto more carefully regarded by us in our actions, than either the love, favour, or satisfaction of any particular persons is to be valued or pursued. And the not observing this rule may reasonably be esteemed to have a great influence upon the continuance of those implacable feuds and dissensions, where-with the world is so miserably torn and shattered. Men being peremptorily resolved to extol, countenance, or excuse promiscuously all the principles and proceedings of the party to which they have addicted themselves, and to see no error, fault, or abuse in them; but by all means to depress, vilify, and condemn (if not to reproach, calumniate, and persecute) the opinions and practices of others, and not to acknowledge in them any thing considerably good or commendable; whence commonly all apprehend their adversaries extremely unjust and disingenuous towards them, and are alienated from all thoughts (or, however, discouraged from all hopes) of friendly accommodation and reconcilement. But he, that would live peaceably with all men, must be free in his judgment, impartial in his dealing, and ingenuous in his carriage toward all: not *θαυμάζων πρόσωπα* admiring or wondering at some men (as if they were impeccable or infallible), nor having the truth in respect to persons, abetting in his friends only what is just and true, and allowing the same in others, but in neither by signal approbation countenancing anything false or evil;[q] for so demeaning himself, he giveth no man just occasion of displeasure or enmity against him.

13. If we would live peaceably ourselves, we should endeavour to preserve peace, and prevent differences, and reconcile dissensions among others, by doing good offices, and making fair representations of intercurrent passages between them; by concealing causes of future disgust, and removing present misunderstandings, and excusing past mistakes; by allaying their passions, and rightly informing their minds, by friendly intercessions, and pacific advices. For the fire that devoureth our neighbour's house threateneth and endangereth ours; and it is hard to approach contention, without being engaged therein. 'Tis not easy to keep ourselves indifferent or neutral; and doing so we shall in likelihood be maligned and persecuted by both the contending parties. *Blessed are the peacemakers* (saith our Saviour) *for they shall be called the sons of God;* that is, they shall be highly esteemed and reverenced for this divine quality, wherein they so nearly resemble the God of peace, and his blessed Son the great Mediator. But further, without respect to other recompense, and from the nature of their employment, such are immediately happy, and in this their virtuous practice rewards itself, that by appeasing others' quarrels, they save themselves from trouble, and enjoy themselves that tranquillity which they procure to others.[r] But those informing sycophants, those internuncios of pestilent tales, and incendiaries of discord, that (from bad nature, or upon base design) by the still breath of clandestine whispers, or by the more violent blasts of impudent calumnies, kindle the flames of dissension, or foment them among others; that by disseminating infamous rumours, and by malicious suggestions, instil jealousies into, and nourish malevolent surmises in the minds of men, *separating*, as it is in the Proverbs, *between chief friends*,[s] and widening the distance between others: these, I say, from the seeds of variance they scatter among others, reap in the end mischief and disturbance to themselves; nor can expect to enjoy the benefit of that quiet, which they labour to deprive others of. *The beginning of strife* (saith Solomon) *is as when one letteth out water*;[t] and he that, to the intent his neighbour's lands should be overflown with a torrent of dissension, doth

[q] Jude 16; James ii. 1.

[r] Matt. v. 9.

[s] To the counsellors of peace is joy.—Prov. xii. 20.

[t] Prov. xvi. 28.

[u] Prov. xvii. 14.

unloose the dams, and cut the banks of former friendship, may (if he be wise) expect the merciless flood should at length reach himself, and that his own habitation should be at last surrounded therewith.[u] For when men at length begin to be weary, and to repent of their needless quarrels, and the mischievous consequences attending them, and to be inquisitive into the causes and instruments of their vexation, they will certainly find out, detest, and invert the edge of their displeasure upon these wretched makebates; and so the poison they mingled for others they themselves drink up;[v] the catastrophe of the tragedy (begun by them) is acted upon themselves; they sink down into the pit they made for others, and in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: *Et delator habet quod dedit exitium.*

Lastly, If we would effectually observe this precept, we must readily comply with the innocent customs, and obey the established laws of the places where we live. I say, first comply with the customs; which also are in effect inferior laws enacted by the tacit agreement of the generality of men; the non-observation of which is upon many accounts very prejudicial to peaceable life. For to those concerned in it, it will always seem to intimate a squeamish niceness, a froward perverseness, an arrogant self-conceitedness, a manifest despising other men's judgments, and a virtual condemning their practices of fault or folly, and consequently a monopolizing all goodness, and appropriating all wisdom to himself; qualities intolerably odious to men, and productive of enmity. It incenses the people (hugely susceptive of provocation) with a sense of notable injury done, and contempt cast upon it. For the only authority which the commonalty can lay claim to, consists in prescribing rules of decency in language, habit, gesture, ceremony, and other circumstances of action, declared and ratified by ordinary practice; non-conformity to which is by them adjudged a marvellous irregularity, contumacy, and rebellion against the majesty of the people, and is infallibly revenged and punished by them.

There is no preserving peace, nor preventing broils and stirs, but by punctually observing that ordinary rule of equity, that in cases of doubtful debate, and points of controverted practice, the fewest should yield to the most, the weakest bend to the strongest, and that to the greatest number should be allowed at least the greatest appearance of reason. To which purpose we may observe, that the best and wisest men (not to displease those with whom they conversed, as far as their duty to God and their conscience would permit), have commonly in their manners of life followed not what in their retired judgment they most approved, but what suited to the customs of their times and places, avoiding a morose singularity, as offensive to others, and productive of disquiet to themselves.* You know how Cicero censured Cato for endeavouring, against the grain and predominant genius of those times, to reduce things to a strict agreement with his private notions: *Ille optimo animo utens, et summa fide, nocet interdum reipublicæ. Dicit enim tanquam in Platonis πολιτεία, non tanquam in Romuli fæce sententiam.*[w] But a more clear and pertinent instance we have in St. Paul, who thus represents his own practice: *I have made myself a servant to all: Unto the Jews I became as a Jew; to them that are without law, as without law: To the weak became I as weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*[x] St. Paul wisely knew,[y] that, by a prudent compliance with men's customs, and condescension to their capacities, he engaged to him, or at least did not alienate from him, their affections; and thereby became more capable of infusing good doctrine into their minds, and promoting their spiritual good. And the same course was generally taken by the primitive Christians, who in all things (not inconsistent with the rules and prin-

[u] Prov. xxv. 8.

[v] *Vide* Prov. xi. 27,—He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour; but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come upon him.

* Id agamus, ut meliorem viam sequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam; aliquid quos emendari volumus fugamus et a nobis avertimus.

Temperetur vita inter bonos mores et publicos, &c.—*Sen. Ep.* 5.

[w] Epist. ad Att. lib. ii. Ep. i.

[x] 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22; x. 33.

[y] *Vide* Acts xxi.

ciples of their religion) did industriously conform their conversation to the usual practices of men; thereby shunning those scandalous imputations of pride and perverseness, which rendered the Jews so odious to the world, as appears by divers passages in the ancient apologists for Christian religion: particularly Justin Martyr (in his Epistle to Diognetus) hath these words: *Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ οὔτε γῇ, οὔτε φωνῇ, οὔτε ἔθεσι διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσιν ἀνθρώπων· οὔτε γάρ που πόλεις ἰδίας κατοικοῦσιν, οὔτε διαλέκτῳ τινὶ παρηλλαγμένῃ χρῶνται, οὔτε βίον παράσημον ἀσκοῦσιν — κατοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνικάς τε καὶ βαρβάρους, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐκληρώθη, ἐν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἔθεσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες*, &c. *The Christians neither in dwelling, language, or customs, differ from the rest of men; they neither inhabit towns proper to themselves, nor use any peculiar dialect, nor exercise an uncouth manner of living; but, as by chance it is allotted to them, inhabiting cities belonging both to Greeks and Barbarians, comply with the customs of the country.* And much more hath he there; and much Tertullian likewise, in his Apologetic, to the same purpose. Neither do we find in the life of our Saviour, that exact pattern of wisdom and goodness, that in any thing he did affect to differ from the received customs of his time and country, except such as were grounded upon vain conceits, extremely prejudicial to piety, or directly repugnant thereto.

And I cannot except from this rule the compliance with religious customs used in the worship and service of God: since a wilful discrepancy from them doth much more destroy peace, and kindle the flame of contention, inasmuch as men are apt to apprehend themselves much more slighted and more condemned by a disagreement in those, than in matters of lesser concernment. And it cannot reasonably be imagined, that the God of love and peace, who questionless delights to see men converse in peace and amity, and who therefore in general terms enjoins us to pursue the things that make for peace (whereof certainly in reason and to experience, following indifferent and harmless customs, not expressly repugnant to his law nor to the dictates of natural reason, is one thing, and not the least), in our addresses to himself (partly designed and mainly serving more strictly to unite, not to dissociate men in affection) should dislike or disapprove the use of this course, so expedient and conducible to peace:[z] especially since he infinitely more regards the substance of the duty, and the devotion of the heart therein, than the manner, or any circumstantial appendages thereof: it is certain, however, that St. Paul intimates a wilful departure from ordinary practice in such cases, to proceed from a contentious disposition: *But if any man* (saith he) *have a mind to be contentious* (so *δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι* imports), *we have no such custom, nor the churches of God.*[a]

But yet much more is peaceable conversation impeached by disobedience to established laws, those great bulwarks of society, fences of order, and supports of peace: which he that refuses to obey, is so far from living peaceably with all men, that he may reasonably be presumed unwilling to have peace with any man; since in a manner he defies all mankind, vilifies its most solid judgments, endeavours to dissolve those sacred bands by which its union is contained, and to subvert the only foundations of public tranquillity. He declares himself either to affect an universal tyranny over, or an abhorrency from society with other men, to be unwilling to live with them upon equal terms, or to submit to any fair arbitration, to desire that strifes should be endless, and controversies never decided, who declines the verdict of law, the most solemn issue of deliberate advice, proceeding from the most honourable, most wise, most worthy, and select persons, and involving in it the consent of the whole commonwealth. St. Paul, directing that prayers should be made for princes and those in authority, assigns the reason, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty*:[b] and certainly if we are to pray for, we are also obliged to obey them in order to the same end, which to do is absolutely in our power, and more immediately requisite to that purpose. For as no peace can be preserved without the influence of authority; so no authority can subsist without obedience to its sanc-

[z] Rom. xiv. 19.
[a] 1 Cor. xi. 16.
[b] 1 Tim. ii. 2.

tions. He that is desirous to enjoy the privileges of this happy estate of peace, must in reason be content to perform the duties enjoined, and bear the common burdens imposed by those who are the protectors of it.

Thus, as plainly as I could, have I described what it is to live peaceably, and what the means are that principally conduce thereto: I should now proceed to consider the object of the duty, and the reasons why it respects all men; as also whence it comes, that sometimes we may fail in our endeavour of attaining this desirable condition; and lastly, to propound some inducements persuasive of its practice. But I must not further encroach on your patience, and shall therefore reserve these things to the next opportunity.

Now the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

SERMON XXX.

OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

Rom. xii. 18.—*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

I HAVE very lately considered what it is to *live peaceably*, and what are the duties included therein; and what means conduce thereto.

II. I proceed now to consider the object thereof and why the duty of living peaceably extends to *all men*, that is, why we are bound to bear good-will, and do good offices, and show civil respects to all men; and to endeavour that all men reciprocally be well-affected toward us. For it might with some colour of reason be objected, and said, Why should I be obliged heartily to love those, that desperately hate me; to treat them kindly, that use me despitefully; to help them, that would hinder me; to relieve them, that would plunge me into utter distress; to comfort them, that delight in my afflictions; to be respective to, and tender of, their reputation, who despise, defame, and reproach me; to be indulgent and favourable to them, who are harsh and rigorous in their dealings with me; to spare and pardon them, who with implacable malice persecute me? Why should I seek their friendship, who disdainfully reject mine? why prize their favour, who scorn mine? why strive to please them, who purposely offend me? Or why should I have any regard to men, void of all faith, goodness, or desert? And most of all, why should I be bound to maintain amicable correspondence with those who are professed enemies to piety and virtue, who oppugn truth, and disturb peace, and countenance vice, error, and faction? How can any love, consent of mind, or communion of good offices, intercede between persons so contrarily disposed? I answer, they may, and ought, and that because the obligation to these ordinary performances is not grounded upon any peculiar respects, special qualifications, or singular actions of men (which are contingent and variable), but upon the indefectible score of common humanity. We owe them as the philosopher alleged, when he dispensed his alms to an unworthy person) *οὐ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ* not to the men, but to human nature resident in them. There be indeed divers other sorts of love, in nature and object more restrained, built upon narrower foundations, and requiring more extraordinary acts of duty and respect, not competent to all men; as a love of friendship, founded upon long acquaintance, suitableness of disposition, and frequent exchanges of mutual kindness; a love of gratitude, due to the reception of valuable benefits; a love of esteem, belonging to persons endued with worth and virtue; a love of relation, resulting from kindred, affinity, neighbourhood, and other common engagements. But the love of benevolence (which is precedent to these, and more deeply rooted in nature, more ancient, more unconfined, and more immutable), and the duties mentioned consequent on it, are grounded upon the natural constitution, necessary properties, and unalterable condition of humanity, and are upon several accounts due thereto.

1. Upon account of universal cognation, agreement, and similitude of nature. For *οἰκεῖον ἅπας ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ*

φίλον· All *men naturally are of kin and friends to each other*, saith Aristotle.[a] *Et fratres etiam vestri sumus jure naturæ matris unius; We are also your brethren in the right of nature our common mother*, saith Tertullian[b] of old, in the name of the Christians to the heathens. We are but several streams issuing from one primitive source; several branches sprouting from the same stock; several stones hewed out of the same quarry; one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction, diffused and multiplied. One element affords us matter, and one fire actuates it, kindled at first by the breath of God. One blood flows in all our veins;[c] one nourishment repairs our decayed bodies, and one common air refreshes our languishing spirits.* We are cohabitants of the same earth, and fellow citizens of the same great commonwealth; *Unam remp. omnium agnoscimus mundum*, said the fore-mentioned apologist for Christianity. We were all fashioned according to the same original idea (resembling God our common Father), all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; all conspire in the essential and more notable ingredients of our constitution; and are only distinguished by some accidental, inconsiderable circumstances of age, place, colour, stature, fortune, and the like; in which we differ as much from ourselves in successions of time. So that what Aristotle said of a friend is applicable to every man; every man is ἄλλος αὐτός, *another ourself*:† and he that hates another, detests his own most lively picture; he that harms another, injures his own nature; he that denies relief to another, starves a member of his own body, and withers a branch of his own tree. *The merciful man doth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.*[d] Neither can any personal demerit of vicious habit, erroneous opinion, enormous practice, or signal discourtesy toward us, dissolve these bands: for as no unkindness of a brother can wholly rescind that relation, or disoblige us from the duties annexed thereto; so neither upon the faults or injuries of any man can we ground a total dispensation from the offices of humanity, especially if the injuries be not irreparable, nor the faults incurable.

2. We are indispensably obliged to these duties, because the best of our natural inclinations prompt us to the performance of them; especially those of pity and benignity, which are manifestly discernible in all, but most powerful and vigorous in the best natures; and which, questionless, by the most wise and good Author of our beings were implanted therein both as monitors to direct, and as spurs to incite us to the performance of our duty. For the same bowels, that, in our want of necessary sustenance, do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide against it, do in like manner grievously resent the distresses of another, and thereby admonish us of our duty, and provoke us to relieve them. Even the stories of calamities, that in ages long since past have happened to persons nowise related to us, yea, the fabulous reports of tragical events, do (even against the bent of our wills, and all resistance of reason) melt our hearts with compassion, and draw tears from our eyes; and thereby evidently signify that general sympathy which naturally intercedes between all men, since we can neither see, nor hear of, nor imagine another's grief, without being afflicted ourselves.* Antipathies may be natural to wild beasts; but to rational creatures they are wholly unnatural. And on the other side, as nature to eating and drinking, and such acts requisite to the preservation of our life, hath adjoined a sensible pleasure and satisfaction, enticing us to, and encouraging us in the performance of them; so, and doubtless to the same end, hath she made relieving the necessities of others, and doing good

* Ἀνθρώποδον οὖν ἀνίξῃ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τοῦ σαυτοῦ ὃς ἔχει τὸν Δία πρόγονον· ὥσπερ υἱὸς ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν σπερμάτων γίγνῃ, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἄνωθεν καταβολῆς, &c. Epict. i. 13.

Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debeatur.—*Aug. Ep.* 121. *ad Probam.*

† Nihil est enim unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus, &c. —*Cic. de Legib.* i. p. 161.

[a] 8 Eth. cap. 1. [b] In Apolog.
[c] Acts xvii. 26. [d] Prov. xi. 17.

* ——— hæc nostri pars optima sensus,— mutuus ut nos affectus petere auxilium, et præstare juberet.—*Juven. Sat.* 15.

[e] See Deut. xxv. 3,—Lest thy brother seem vile unto thee.

offices to them, to be accompanied with a very contentful and delicious relish to the mind of the doer. Epicurus, that great master of pleasure, did himself confess, that to bestow benefits was not only more brave, but more pleasant, than to receive them; (Ἐπίκουρος (saith Plutarch)* τοῦ εὖ πάσχειν, το εὖ ποιεῖν, οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναι φησί.) And, certainly, no kind of actions a man can perform are attended with a more pure, more perfect, more savoury delight, than those of beneficence are. Since nature, therefore, hath made our neighbour's misery our pain, and his content our pleasure; since with indissoluble bands of mutual sympathy she hath concatenated our fortunes and affections together; since by the discipline of our sense she instructs us, and by the importunity thereof solicits us to the observance of our duty, let us follow her wise directions, and conspire with her kindly motions; let us not stifle or weaken by disuse, or contrary practice, but by conformable action cherish and confirm the good inclinations of nature.

3. We are obliged to these duties upon account of common equity. We have all (the most sour and stoical of us all) implanted in us a natural ambition, and a desire (which we can by no means eradicate) of being beloved and respected by all; and are disposed in our need to demand assistance, commiseration of our misfortunes, and relief in our distress, of all that are in capacity to afford them; and are apt to be vehemently displeased, to think ourselves hardly dealt with, and to complain of cruelty and inhumanity in those that refuse them to us: and therefore in all reason and equity we should readily pay the same love, respect, aid, and comfort to others, which we expect from others; for, *Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit;* nothing is more unreasonable, or unequal, than to require from others those good turns, which upon like occasion we are unwilling to render to others.

4. We are obliged to these duties of humanity, upon account of common interest, benefit, and advantage. The welfare and safety, the honour and reputation, the pleasure and quiet of our lives, are concerned in our maintaining a loving correspondence with all men. For so uncertain is our condition, so obnoxious are we to manifold necessities, that there is no man whose good-will we may not need, whose good word may not stand us in stead, whose helpful endeavour may not sometime oblige us. The great Pompey, the glorious triumpher over nations, and admired darling of fortune, was beholden at last to a slave for the composing his ashes and celebrating his funeral obsequies. The honour of the greatest men depends on the estimation of the least; and the good-will of the meanest peasant is a brighter ornament to the fortune, a greater accession to the grandeur of a prince, than the most radiant gem in his royal diadem. However the spite and enmity of one (and him the most weak otherwise and contemptible) person may happen to spoil the content of our whole life, and deprive us of the most comfortable enjoyments thereof; may divert our thoughts from our delightful employments to a solicitous care of self preservation and defence; may discompose our minds with vexatious passions; may by false reports, odious suggestions, and slanderous defamations, blast our credit, raise a storm of general hatred, and conjure up thousands of enemies against us; may by insidious practices supplant and undermine us, prejudice our welfare, endanger our estate, and involve us in a bottomless gulph of trouble: it is but reasonable, therefore, if we desire to live securely, comfortably, and quietly, that by all honest means we should endeavour to purchase the good-will of all men, and provoke no man's enmity needlessly; since any man's love may be useful, and every man's hatred is dangerous.

5. We are obliged to these duties by a tacit compact and fundamental constitution of mankind, in pursuance of those principal designs, for which men were incorporated, and are still contained in civil society. For to this purpose do men congregate, cohabit, and combine themselves in sociable communion, that thereby they may enjoy a delightful conversation, void of fear, free from suspicion, and free from danger; promote mutual advantage and satisfaction; be helpful and beneficial each to other: abstracting from which commodities, the retirements of a cloister,

* De Philos. convictu cum Princip.—Εὐφραίνου τὸ εὐεργετεῖν. M. Ant.

or the solitudes of a desert, the life of a recluse or of a wild beast, would perhaps be more desirable than these of gregarious converse: for as men, being pleased and well-affected to each other, are the most obliging friends and pleasant companions; so being enraged, they are the most mischievous and dangerous neighbours, the most fierce and savage enemies. By neglecting, therefore, or contravening these duties of humanity, we frustrate the main ends of society, disappoint the expectations of each other, subvert the grounds of ordinary civility, and in the commonwealth deal as unpoliticly, as the members in the body should act unnaturally, in subtracting mutual assistance, or harming each other; as if the eye should deny to the hands the direction of sight, and the hands in revenge should pluck out the eyes.

6. We are by observing these rules to oblige and render men well-affected to us, because being upon such terms with men conduceth to our living (not only delightfully and quietly, but) honestly and religiously in this world. How peace and edification, spiritual comfort and temporal quiet, do concur and co-operate, we see intimated Acts ix. 31: *Then had the churches peace throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.* St. Paul advised the Christians of his time, liable to persecution, *to make prayers for all men*, (and *especially for those in eminent power*), *that they might lead* a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;*[y] to pray for them, that is, to pray that they might be so disposed as not to molest, interrupt, or discourage them in the exercise of virtue, and practice of piety. For these by a tranquillity of mind, a sedateness of affections, a competency of rest, and leisure and retirement, a freedom from amazing fear, distracting care, and painful sense, are greatly advanced; of which advantages by contentious broils and enmities we are deprived, and encumbered with the contrary impediments. They breed thorny anxieties, and by them choke the seeds of good intention: they raise dusky fumes of melancholy, by them intercepting the beams of spiritual light, and stifling the flames of devout affection. By them our thoughts are affixed upon the basest, and taken off from the most excellent objects; our fancies are disordered by turbulent animosities; our time is spent, and our endeavour taken up in the most ungrateful and unprofitable employments, of defeating the attempts, resisting the assaults, disproving the calumnies, countermining the plots of adversaries; they bring us upon the stage against our will, and make us act parts in tragedies, neither becoming, nor delighting us. They disturb often our natural rest, and hinder us in the despatch of our ordinary business; and much more impede the steadiness of our devotion, and obstruct the course of religious practice. They tempt us also to omissions of our duty, to unseemly behaviour, and to the commissions of grievous sin; to harsh censure, envious detraction, unwarrantable revenge, repining at the good successes, and delighting in the misfortunes of others. Many examples occur in history, like those of Hanno the Carthaginian, and Quint. Metellus (Pompey's antagonist), who, in pursuance of some private grudges, have not only betrayed their own interests, and sullied their own reputations; but notably disserved and damnified the public weal of their country: and so will our being engaged in enmity with men cause us to neglect, if not to contradict, our dearest concernments; whence we should carefully avoid the occasions thereof, and by an innocent and beneficent conversation oblige men to a friendly correspondence with us.

7. We are obliged to perform these duties of humanity, because by so doing we become more capable of promoting goodness in others, and so of fulfilling the highest duties of Christian charity; of successfully advising and admonishing others; of instructing their ignorance, and convincing their mistakes; of removing their prejudices, and satisfying their scruples; of reclaiming them from vice, error, faction; and reconciling them to virtue, truth, and peace. For by no force of reason, or stratagem of wit, are men so easily subdued, by no bait so throughly allured and caught, as by real courtesy, gentleness, and affability; as on the other side, by a sour and peevish hu-

* Ἥρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον, a retired and quiet life.

[y] 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

mour, supercilious looks, bitter language, and harsh dealing, men are rendered indocile and intractable, averse from better instruction, obstinate in their ways, and pertinacious in their conceits. Easily do men swallow the pill gilded with fair carriage, and sweetened by kind speech; readily do they afford a favourable ear to the advice seeming to proceed from goodwill, and a tender care of their good: but the physic of wholesome admonition being steeped in the vinegar of reproach, and tempered with the gall of passion, becomes distasteful and loathsome to the patient; neither will men willingly listen to the reasonings of those whom they apprehend disaffected to their persons, and more desirous to wound their reputations, than to cure their distempers. The slightest argument, the most simple and unpolished oration, issuing from the mouth of a friend, is wonderfully more prevalent, than the strongest demonstration, than the most powerful eloquence, of an enemy. For obliging usage and courteous speech unlock the affections, and by them insinuate into the reason of men; but surly deportment and froward expressions dam up the attention with prejudice, and interclude all avenues to the understanding. An illustration of which discourse we have from comparing the different practice of the Jews, and the ancient Christians, with the contrary successes thereof. The Jews, by their seditious and turbulent practices, by their insolent contempt, and implacable hatred of others (for you know what Tacitus saith of them: *Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium*;[a]) by their perverse and unsociable humours, declining all intercourse, and refusing ordinary offices of humanity (so much as to show the way, or to direct the thirsty traveller to the fountain) to any not of their own sect, did procure an odium, scorn, and infamy upon their religion, rendered all men averse from inquiring into, or entertaining any good opinion thereof, and so very little enlarged its bounds, and gained few proselytes thereto. But the Christians, by a mild, patient, and peaceable behaviour; by obedience to laws, and compliance with harmless customs; by perfect innocence, and abstinence from doing injury; by paying due respects, and performing civil offices and demonstrations of benevolence; by loving conversation and friendly commerce with all, commended their doctrine to the regard of men:* and by this only piece of rhetoric (without terror of arms, or countenance of power, or plausibility of discourse, or promise of temporal reward) subdued the faith of men, and persuaded a great part of the world to embrace their excellent profession.

"We converse with you like men, we use the same diet, habit, and necessary furniture: we have recourse to your tribunals; we frequent your markets, your fairs, your shops, your stalls, your shambles, your baths: we cohabit, we sail, we war, we till, we trade, we maintain all manner of commerce with you;"[b] saith the Christian apologist to the pagans, in behalf of the ancient Christians. Which kind of practice they derived not only from the sweet temper and noble genius of their religion, but from the express institution of the first teachers thereof, and from their exemplary practice therein. For both by doctrine did the apostles exhort, and by their example incite them to adorn the gospel, and render the discipline of Christ amiable by their meek, gentle, compliant, and inoffensive conversation; and thereby to allure others to a willing entertainment thereof. To this purpose are those exhortations, Phil. iv. 5—*let your moderation* (τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν, *your equity*, or *gentleness*) *be known to all men:* and 1 Thess. v. 14—*Comfort the afflicted,*† *support the weak, be long suffering toward all. Be ye all careful not to render evil for evil, but always pursue goodness toward each other and toward all:* and Gal. vi. 10—*As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men:* and Tit. iii. 1, 2—*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to be ready to every good work, to reproach no man, not to be contentious, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men:* and 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25—*The minis-*

[a] Hist. lib. v.

* Thus the ancient Christians: but when religion declined, dissension and ill-will did grow; so that the heathen historian (*Am. Mar.* lib. xxii.) could say of Julian: *Nullas infestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi ferales plerique Christianorum, expertus.*

† Τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους. [b] Tertull. Apol.

ter of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves (or those that are otherwise disposed, τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους:) *if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth:* where gentleness toward all, and meekness toward adversaries, are oppositely conjoined, with aptness to teach and instruct; the one qualification so effectually predisposing to the other: and it is beside intimated, that gentle and meek treatment are suitable instruments ordinarily employed by God to convert men from error to truth.

8. We are bound hereto in compliance and conformity to the best patterns; God, Christ, the apostles, the primitive saints. This illustrious doctor of Christian religion, St. Paul, did not fail to second this his doctrine with his own example: for, *Give none offence* (saith he) *neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God; even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Please all men in all things:*[c] what could St. Paul say, or what do more? And again, *For though* (saith he) *I be free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might save some.*[d] See how far this charitable design of doing good to others transported him: he parted with his own freedom, that he might redeem them from the slavery of a wicked life; he denied his own present satisfaction, that he might procure them a lasting content; he despised his own profit, that he might promote their spiritual advantage; he prostituted his own reputation, that he might advance them to a condition of true glory. He underwent grievous afflictions for their comfort, sustained restless pains for their ease, and hazarded his own safety for their salvation. He condescended to their infirmities, suited his demeanour to their tempers, complied with their various humours, and contrary customs: he differed from himself, that he might agree with them, and transformed himself into all shapes, that he might convert them into what they should be, reform their manners, and translate them into a happy estate. But above all is the practice of our Lord himself most remarkable to this purpose; and discovers plainly to him that observes an universally large and unrestrained philanthropy. For having, from a wonderful conspiracy of kindness and good-will (between him and his eternal Father) toward the world of men, descended willingly from the throne of his celestial majesty, and enveloped his divine glory in a cloud of mortal frailty, and *that* (as the apostle saith) *he might reconcile all things in heaven and earth,*[e] conjoin God and man by a nearer alliance, and unite men together by the more sacred bands of common relation to himself: having assumed not only the outward shape and corporeal resemblance of man, but the inward frame, and real passions of human souls; he disdained not accordingly to obey the laws, to follow the inclinations, to observe the duties of the best and most perfect humanity; with an equal and impartial bounty imparting free admittance, familiar converse, friendly aid and succour, unto all, even the worst of men in all appearance (and that so far, that some rigorous censurers thence presumed to tax him as *a glutton, and a good-fellow, a friend to publicans and sinners,*[f]) distributing liberally to all, the incomparable benefits of heavenly doctrine, of his holy example, of his miraculous power; instructing the ignorances, detecting the errors, dispossessing the devils; sustaining the weaknesses, overlooking the injures, comforting the afflictions, supplying the necessities, healing the diseases, and remedying all the miseries of all, that did not wilfully reject their own welfare: *He went about* (saith St. Peter in the Acts) *doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil:* and, *He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people,*[g] saith St. Matthew's Gospel. He despised not the meanest, either in outward estate, or spiritual improvement. He invited all unto him, repelled or discouraged none; nor refused to any that

[c] 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. [d] 1 Cor. ix. 12, &c. [e] Coloss. i. 20. [f] Matt. xi. 19 [g] Acts x. 38; Matt. ix. 35.

came unto him his counsel or his help. He was averse from no man's society (and if in any degree from any, chiefly from those, who confidently pretended to extraordinary sanctity, and proudly contemned others.[h]) Meek and gentle he was, mild and patient; courteous and benign; lowly and condescensive; tender and compassionate in his conversation unto all. And for a complement of his transcendent charity, and for an enforcement unto ours, he laid down his life for us all, as a common price to purchase remission of sins;[i] a general ransom to redeem the human creation from the captivity of hell and slavery of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; demolishing by his pacific death all partition-walls, and laying open all enclosures of the divine favour; reconciling God to man, and combining man to himself by the fresh cement of his precious blood: so that now not only as fellow-creatures, but (which is exceedingly more) as partakers of the same common redemption, as objects of the same mercy, as obliged in the same common debt, and as capable of the same eternal happiness, by new and firmer engagements we are bound to all mutual kindness and benevolence toward all. For, *Destroy not*, saith St. Paul (and by like reason I may say, harm not, vex not, be not unkind to) *him, for whom Christ died.*[j]

Nay, further, we have the example of Almighty God himself directing, and by our Saviour's express admonition obliging us to this universal beneficence, compassion, and patience towards all: who by express testimony of sacred writ, and by palpable signs of continual experience, declareth himself to be a lover of mankind; to be good to all, and tenderly merciful over all his works:[k] not to afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men; to compassionate the miseries, and supply the needs, and relieve the distresses, to desire the salvation, and to delight in the happiness of men: who with an indifferent, unlimited munificence dispenses his blessings, extends his watchful providence, and imparts his loving care unto all; causing his sun with comfortable beams to shine, and the refreshing showers to descend, the earth to yield her pleasant fruits, the temperate seasons to recur, and all the elements to minister succour, joy, and satisfaction, even to the most impious and ungrateful toward him:[l] who with immense clemency and long-sufferance overlooks the sacrilegious affronts offered daily to his majesty, the outrageous violations of his laws, and the contemptuous neglects of his unexpressible goodness: who patiently waits for the repentance, and incessantly solicits the reconcilement, courts the amity, and in a manner begs the good-will of his most deadly enemies; whom he hath always in his hand, and can crush to nothing at his pleasure. For, *We are embassadors for Christ, as if God by us did entreat you: we beseech you in Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God*, saith St Paul, 2 Cor. v. 20.

Since, therefore, upon account of natural consanguinity, of our best inclinations, of common equity and general advantage, and an implicit compact between men; of securing our, and promoting others' virtue and piety; from the exhortations of scripture mentioned, and many more tending to the same purpose; from the example of the ancient Christians, the leaders and champions of our religion, of the apostles, the masters and patriarchs thereof, of our blessed Redeemer, and of Almighty God himself, we are obliged to this universal benevolence and beneficence toward all; no misapprehensions of judgment, no miscarriages in practice, no ill dispositions of soul, no demerits in himself, no discourtesies toward us, ought wholly to alienate our affections from, or to avert us from doing good, or to incline us to render evil for evil unto any person: especially considering, that the omissions of others cannot excuse us from the performance of our duty; that no man is to be presumed incorrigible, nor (like the lapsed angels) concluded in desperate impenitence; and that our loving and gentle demeanour toward them may be instrumental to their amendment, and the contrary may contribute to their progress and continuance in offences; that God hath promised to us a reward of our patience, and hath reserved to them a season of judgment and punishment, if

[h] Luke xviii. 9. [i] Rom. viii. 32.
[j] Rom. xiv. 15. [k] Tit. iii. 4; Psal. cxlv. 9.
[l] *Vide* Clement. Epist. ad Cor. page 27.

they persist obstinate in their disorderly courses; that to avenge their trespasses belongs not to us, but to Almighty God, who is more nearly concerned in, and more injured by them, and is yet content to endure them, to prolong their lives, to continue his benefits to them, and to expect their conversion: that our differing from them is not to be attributed to ourselves, but wholly, or chiefly, to the goodness of God; that we always were, are, and shall be liable to the same errors, vices, and misdemeanours: that, lastly, the faults and follies of others, like the maims of body, distempers of soul, or crosses of fortune (being their own greatest unhappiness), require rather our pity than our hatred, to be eased by our help than aggravated by our unkindness. 'Tis too scant, therefore, and narrow a charity, that is limited by correspondence of courtesy, or by the personal merits of others. We are bound to live peaceably with, that is, to be innocent, beneficial, respectful to all, and to seek the reciprocal good-will, love and amity of all. But I have insisted too long upon this particular, concerning the object of this duty and its extension.

III. I proceed briefly to consider whence it comes, that (as I before observed was intimated in these words, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you*) though we do our parts, and perform carefully the duties incumbent on us, though we bear good-will, and do good offices, and yield due respects, and abstain from all not only injurious, but rigorous dealings towards all; though we revile none, nor censure harshly, nor presumptuously intermeddle with others' affairs; though we obey laws, and comply with received customs, and avoid all occasions of contention; though our tempers be meek, our principles peaceable, and our conversations inoffensive, we may yet prove successless in our endeavours to live peaceably, and may be hated, harmed, and disquieted in our course of life. That it so happens, we find by plain experience, and manifold example. For *Moses, the meekest man upon earth*, and commended beside by all circumstances of divine favour, and human worth, was yet often envied, impugned, and molested by those, whom by all manner of benefits he had most highly obliged. And we find David[m] frequently complaining, that by those, whose good-will, by performing all offices of friendly kindness and brotherly affection, he had studiously laboured to deserve, whose maladies and calamities he had not only tenderly commiserated, but had prayed and humbled his soul with fasting for their recovery and deliverance from them, was yet recompensed by their treacherous devices against his safety, by grievous reproaches, and scornful insulting over him in his affliction; as we see at large in Psalms xxxv. and lxix. And in Psalm cxx. he thus lamentably bemoans his condition: *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar: My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace: I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.* And our blessed Saviour himself, though in the whole tenor of his life he demonstrated an incomparable meekness and sweetness of disposition, and exercised continually all manner of kindness and beneficence toward all men, was notwithstanding loaded with all kinds of injuries and contumelies, was bitterly hated, ignominiously disgraced, and maliciously persecuted unto death. And the same lot befell his faithful disciples, that although their design was benign and charitable, their carriage blameless and obliging toward all, they were yet pursued constantly both by the outrageous clamours of the people, and cruel usages from those in eminent power. Now, though it seem strange and almost incredible, that they who are truly friends to all, and are ready to do to all what good they can; who willingly displease none, but industriously strive to acquire (not with glozing shows of popularity, but by real expressions of kindness) the good-will and favour of all, should yet be maligned, or molested by any; yet seeing it so happens, if we inquire into the reason, we shall find this miracle in morality to proceed (to omit the neglect of the duties mentioned in our former discourse) chiefly from the exceeding variety, difference, and contrariety of men's dispositions, joined with the morosity, aptness to mistake, envy, or unreasonable perverseness of some; which necessarily

[m] *Vide* Psal. lv. 10.

render the means of attaining all men's good-will insufficient, and the endeavours unsuccessful. For men seeing by several lights, relishing with diversely disposed palates, and measuring things by different standards, we can hardly do or say any thing, which, if approved and applauded by some, will not be disliked and blamed by others; if it advance us in the opinion of some, will not as much depress us in the judgment of others; so that in this irreconcileable diversity and inconsistency of men's apprehensions, it is impossible not to displease many; especially since some men, either by their natural temper, or from the influence of some sour principles they have imbibed, are so morose, rigid, and self-willed; so impatient of all contradiction to, or discrepancy from, their sentiments, that they cannot endure any to dissent in judgment, or vary in practice from them, without incurring their heavy disdain and censure. And, which makes the matter more desperate and remediless, such men commonly being least able either to manage their reason or to command their passion, as guided wholly by certain blind impulses of fancy, or groundless prejudices of conceit, or by a partial admiration of some men's persons, examples, and authorities, are usually most resolute and peremptory in their courses, and thence hardly capable of any change, mitigation, or amendment. Of which sort there being divers engaged in several ways, it is impossible to please some without disgusting the other; and difficult altogether to approach any of these wasps without being stung or vexed by them. Some also are so apt to misunderstand men's meanings, to misconstrue their words, and to make ill descants upon, or draw bad consequences from their actions, that it is not possible to prevent their entertaining ill-favoured prejudices against even those that are heartily their friends, and wish them the best. To others the good and prosperous estate of their neighbour, that he flourishes in wealth, power, or reputation, is ground sufficient of hatred and enmity against him: for so we see that Cain hated his innocent brother Abel, because his brother's works were more righteous, and his sacrifices better accepted than his own; that Joseph's brethren were mortally offended at him, because his father especially loved and delighted in him; that Saul was enraged against David, because his gallant deeds were celebrated with due praises and joyful acclamations of the people; and that the Babylonian princes upon no other score maligned Daniel, but because he enjoyed the favour of the king, and a dignity answerable to his deserts. And who, that loves his own welfare, can possibly avoid such enmities as these? But the fatal rock, upon which peaceable designs are most inevitably split, and which by no prudent steering our course can sometimes be evaded, is the unreasonable perverseness of men's pretences, who sometimes will upon no terms be friends with us, or allow us their good-will, but upon condition of concurring with them in dishonest and unwarrantable practices; of omitting some duties, to which by the express command of God, or evident dictates of right reason, we are obliged, or performing some action repugnant to those indispensable rules. But though peace with men is highly valuable, and possessing their good-will, in worth not inferior to any other indifferent acommodation of life, yet are these nothing comparable to the favour of God, or the internal satisfaction of conscience; nor though we were assured thereby to gain the entire love and favour of all men living, are we to purchase them at so dear a rate, as with the loss of these. We must not, to please or gratify men, commit anything prohibited, or omit anything enjoined by God, the least glimpse of whose favourable aspect is infinitely more to be prized, than the most intimate friendship of the mightiest monarchs upon earth; and the least spark of whose indignation is more to be dreaded, than the extremest displeasure of the whole world. In case of such competition, we must resolve with St. Paul, *Do I yet conciliate* God, or do I endeavour to soothe men? For if I yet soothed* (or flattered) *men* (so you know ἀρέσκειν signifies), *I were not the servant of Christ.*[n] Nor are we, that we may satisfy any man's pleasure, to contravene the dictates of reason (that subordinate guide of our actions), to do any dishonourable or uncomely action, unworthy of a man, mis-

* πείθω. [n] Gal. i. 10.

beseeming our education, or incongruous to our station in human society, so as to make ourselves worthily despicable to the most by contenting some: nor are we bound always to desert our own considerable interest, or betray our just liberty, that we may avoid the enmity of such as would violently or fraudulently encroach upon them. Nor are we, in the administration of justice, distribution of rewards, or arbitration of controversies, to respect the particular favour of any, but the merits only of the cause, or the worth of the persons concerned. Nor are we, by feeding men's distempered humours, or gratifying their abused fancies, to prejudice or neglect their real good; to encourage them in bad practices, to foment their irregular passions, to applaud their unjust or uncharitable censures, or to puff up their minds with vain conceit by servile flattery: but rather, like faithful physicians, to administer wholesome, though unsavoury advice; to reveal to them their mistakes, to check their intended progress in bad courses, to reprove their faults seasonably, and when it may probably do them good, though possibly thereby we may provoke their anger and procure their ill-will, and, as St. Paul saith, become their enemies, for telling them the truth.[o] Nor are we ever explicitly to assent to falsehoods (so apprehended by us), to belie our consciences, or contradict our real judgments (though we may sometimes for peace sake prudently conceal them;) nor to deny the truth our defence and patronage, when in order to some good purpose it needs and requires them, though thereby we may incur the dislike, and forfeit the good-will of some men. Nor are we by entertaining any extraordinary friendship, intimate familiarity, or frequent converse with persons notoriously dissolute in their manners, disorderly in their behaviour, or erroneous in weighty points of opinion, to countenance their misdemeanours, dishonour our profession, render ourselves justly suspected, run the hazard of contagion, or hinder their reformation. And especially we are warily to decline the particular acquaintance of men of contentious dispositions, mischievous principles, and factious designs; a bare keeping company with whom looks like a conspiracy, an approving or abetting their proceedings; the refusing any encouragement, signification of esteem, or vouchsafing any peculiar respect to such, we owe to the honour of virtue, which they disgrace, to the love of truth, which they oppugn, to the peace of the world, which they disturb, and to the general good of mankind, which they impeach. And so St. Paul warns us not to *mingle* or consort, not to *diet* or *common*[p] (μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι, and μὴ συνεσθίειν) with men of a dissolute and disorderly conversation: and, *to mark them which cause seditions, and scandals, contrary to Christian doctrine, and to shun or decline them*[q] (ἐκκλίνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν,) and to repudiate, deprecate the familiarity of heretics (αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον παραιτεῖσθαι.) And St. John forbids us to *wish joy*,[r] or to allow the ordinary respects of civil salutation to apostates and impostors; *lest* (by such demonstration of favour) *we communicate with them in their wicked works.* None of which precepts are intended to interdict to us, or to disoblige us from bearing real good-will, or dispensing needful benefits to any, but to deter us from yielding any signal countenance to vice and impiety; and to excite us to declare such dislike and detestation of those heinous enormities, as may confer to the reclaiming of these, and prevent the seduction of others. So St. Paul expressly, *But if any man obeyeth not our injunction by epistle, do not consort with him, that he may by shame be reclaimed* (ἵνα ἐντραπῇ:) and, *Account him not an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*[s] Nor ought, lastly, the love of peace, and desire of friendly correspondence with any men, avert us from an honest zeal (proportionable to our abilities and opportunities) of promoting the concernments of truth and goodness, though against powerful and dangerous opposition; I say an honest zeal, meaning thereby not that blind, heady passion, or inflammation of spirit, transporting men beyond the bounds of reason and discretion, upon some superficially plausible pretences, to violent and irregular practices; but a considerate and steady resolution of mind, effectually animating

[o] Gal. iv. 16.

[p] 1 Cor. v. 11. Ἀτάκτως περιπ.
[q] Rom. xvi. 17; Tit. iii. 10. [r] 2 John 10.
[s] 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

a man by warrantable and decent means vigorously to prosecute commendable designs; like that St. Jude mentions, of *striving earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.*[t] For this zeal may be very consistent with, yea, greatly conducible to, the designs of peace. And 'tis not a drowsiness, a slack remissness, a heartless diffidence, or a cowardly flinching from the face of danger and opposition, we discourse about, or plead for; but a wise and wary declining the occasions of needless and unprofitable disturbance to ourselves and others.

To conclude this point (which, if time would have permitted, I should have handled more fully and distinctly), though to preserve peace, and purchase the goodwill of men, we may and ought to quit much of our private interest and satisfaction, yet ought we not to sacrifice to them what is not our own, nor committed absolutely to our disposal, and which in value incomparably transcends them, the maintenance of truth, the advancement of justice, the practice of virtue, the quiet of our conscience, the favour of Almighty God. And if, for being dutiful to God, and faithful to ourselves in these particulars, any men will hate, vex, and despite us; frustrate our desires, and defeat our purposes of living peaceably with all men in this world; we may comfort ourselves in the enjoyment of eternal peace and satisfaction of mind, in the assurance of the divine favour, in the hopes of eternal rest and tranquillity in the world to come.

Now briefly to induce us to the practice of this duty of living peaceably, we may consider:—

1. *How good and pleasant a thing it is* (as David saith) *for brethren* and so we are all at least by nature) *to live together in untiy.*[u] How that, as Solomon saith, *better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.*[v] How delicious that conversation is, which is accompanied with a mutual confidence, freedom, courtesy, and complaisance: how calm the mind, how composed the affections, how serene the countenance, how melodious the voice, how sweet the sleep, how contentful the whole life is of him, that neither deviseth mischief against others, nor suspects any to be contrived against himself; and contrariwise, how ingrateful and loathsome a thing it is to abide in a state of enmity, wrath, dissension; having the thoughts distracted with solicitous care, anxious suspicion, envious regret; the heart boiling with choler; the face overclouded with discontent, the tongue jarring and out of tune, the ears filled with discordant noises of contradiction, clamour, and reproach; the whole frame of body and soul distempered and disturbed with the worst of passions. How much more comfortable it is to walk in smooth and even paths, than to wander in rugged ways overgrown with briars, obstructed with rubs, and beset with snares; to sail steadily in a quiet, than to be tossed in a tempestuous sea; to behold the lovely face of heaven smiling with a cheerful serenity, than to see it frowning with clouds, or raging with storms; to hear harmonious consents, than dissonant janglings; to see objects correspondent in graceful symmetry, than lying disorderly in confused heaps: to be in health, and have the natural humours consent in moderate temper, than (as it happens in diseases) agitated with tumultuous commotions: how all senses and faculties of man unanimously rejoice in those emblems of peace, order, harmony, and proportion; yea, how nature universally delights in a quiet stability, or undisturbed progress of motion; the beauty, strength, and vigour of every thing requires a concurrence of force, co-operation, and contribution of help; all things thrive and flourish by communicating reciprocal aid, and the world subsists by a friendly conspiracy of its parts;[w] and especially that political society of men chiefly aims at peace as its end, depends on it as its cause, relies on it as its support. How much a peaceful state resembles heaven, into which neither *complaint*, *pain*, nor *clamour*[x] (οὔτε πένθος, οὔτε πόνος, οὔτε κραυγή,) as it is in the Apocalypse) do ever enter; but blessed souls converse together in perfect love, and in perpetual concord: and how a condition of enmity represents the state of hell, that black and dismal region of dark hatred, fiery wrath, and horrible tumult. How like a paradise the world would be, flourishing

[t] Jude 3.
[u] Psal. cxxxiii. 1. [v] Prov. xvii. 1.
[w] *Vide* Clem. ad Cor. p. 27, &c.
[x] Rev. xxi.

in joy and rest, if men would cheerfully conspire in affection, and helpfully contribute to each other's content:* and how like a savage wilderness now it is, when, like wild beasts, they vex and persecute, worry and devour each other. How not only philosophy hath placed the supreme pitch of happiness in a calmness of mind, and tranquillity of life, void of care and trouble, of irregular passions and perturbations; but that holy scripture itself, in that one term of *peace*, most usually comprehends all joy and content, all felicity and prosperity: so that the heavenly consort of angels, when they agree most highly to bless, and to wish the greatest happiness to mankind, could not better express their sense, than by saying, *Be on earth peace, and good will among men.*[y]

2. That as nothing is more sweet and delightful, so nothing more comely and agreeable to human nature, than peaceable living, it being, as Solomon saith, *an honour to a man to cease from strife;*[z] and consequently also a disgrace to him to continue therein: that rage and fury may be the excellencies of beasts, and the exerting their natural animosity in strife and combat may become them; but reason and discretion are the singular eminences of men, and the use of these the most natural and commendable method of deciding controversies among them: and that it extremely misbecomes them that are endowed with those excellent faculties so to abuse them, as not to apprehend each other's meanings, but to ground vexatious quarrels upon the mistake of them; not to be able by reasonable expedients to compound differences, but with mutual damage and inconvenience to prorogue and increase them: not to discern how exceedingly better it is to be helpful and beneficial, than to be mischievous and troublesome to one another. How foolishly and unskilfully they judge, that think by unkind speech and harsh dealing to allay men's distempers, alter their opinions, or remove their prejudices; as if they should attempt to kill by ministering nourishment, or to extinguish a flame by pouring oil upon it. How childish a thing it is eagerly to contend about trifles, for the superiority in some impertinent contest, for the satisfaction of some petty humour, for the possession of some inconsiderable toy; yea, how barbarous and brutish a thing it is, to be fierce and impetuous in the pursuit of things that please us, snarling at, biting, and tearing all competitors of our game, or opposers of our undertaking. But how divine and amiable, how worthy of human nature, of civil breeding, of prudent consideration it is, to restrain partial desires, to condescend to equal terms, to abate from rigorous pretences, to appease discords, and vanquish enmities by courtesy and discretion; like the best and wisest commanders, who by skilful conduct, and patient attendance upon opportunity, without striking of stroke, or shedding of blood, subdue their enemy.

3. How that peace with its near alliance and concomitants, its causes and effects, love, meekness, gentleness, and patience, are in sacred writ reputed the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit, issues of divine grace, and offsprings of heavenly wisdom;[a] producing like themselves a goodly progeny of righteous deeds. But that emulation, hatred, wrath, variance, and strife derive their extraction from fleshly lust, hellish craft, or beastly folly; propagating themselves also into a like ugly brood of wicked works. For so saith St. James,—*If ye have bitter zeal and strife in your hearts, glory not, nor be deceived untruly:* * *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish: For where emulation and strife are, there is tumult,*† *and every naughty thing:*‡ *but the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, obsequious,*§ *full of mercy* (or beneficence) *and of good fruits without partiality and dissimulation: And the fruit of righteousness is sowed in peace to those that make peace; And from whence are wars and quarrels among you? Are they not hence, even from your lusts, that war in your members?*[b] Likewise, *He loveth transgression that loveth strife;* and, *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes,*

* Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.—Prov. xv. 17. Ἀταραξία.

[y] Luke ii. 14. [z] Prov. xx. 3.

* Καὶ μὴ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας.
† Ἀκαταστασία, confusion.
‡ Φαῦλον πράγμα. § Εὐπειθής.
[a] Gal. v. [b] James iii. 14, 18; iv. 1.

saith Solomon.[c] That the most wicked and miserable of creatures is described by titles denoting enmity and discord:* *the hater* (Satan) *the enemy* (ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος), *the accuser* (ὁ κατήγορος), *the slanderer* (ὁ διάβολος), *the destroyer* (ὁ ἀπολλύων), the furious dragon, and mischievously treacherous snake:[d] and how sad it is to imitate him in his practices, to resemble him in his qualities. But that the best, most excellent, and most happy of Beings delights to be styled, and accordingly to express himself, *The God of love, mercy, and peace;* and his blessed Son to be called and to be *The Prince of peace*, the great *Mediator*, *Reconciler*, and *Peacemaker*;† who is also said from on high to have visited us, *to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; and to guide our feet in the ways of peace.* That, lastly, no devotion is pleasing, no oblation acceptable to God, conjoined with hatred, or proceeding from an unreconciled mind: for, *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember-est that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*,[e] saith our Saviour.

I close up all with this corollary: that if we must live lovingly and peaceably with all men, then much more are we obliged to do so with all Christians: to whom by nearer and firmer bands of holy alliance we are related; by more precious communions in faith and devotion we are endeared; by more peculiar and powerful obligations of divine commands, sacramental vows, and formal professions, we are engaged: our spiritual brethren, members of the same mystical body, temples of the same Holy Spirit, servants of the same Lord, subjects of the same Prince, professors of the same truth, partakers of the same hope, heirs of the same promise, and candidates of the same everlasting happiness.

* Qui posuit in cœlo bellum, in paradiso fraudem, odium inter primos fratres.—*Aug.*

† Χαίρει γὰρ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ λογικῶν τῶν ζώων ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἐκτρέπεται τὴν διαφωνίαν.—Orig. c. Cels. 8. p. 424.

[c] Prov. xvii. 19; xviii. 6.

[d] Matt. xiii. 28,—Ἀντιδίκος. 1 Pet. v. 8. A murderer, John viii. 44. 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Philip. iv. 9; 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; Heb. vii.

[e] Luke i. 79. [f] Matt. v. 23, 24.

Now Almighty God, the most good and beneficent Maker, gracious Lord, and merciful Preserver of all things, infuse into our hearts those heavenly graces of meekness, patience and benignity, grant us and his whole church, and all his creation to serve him quietly here, and in a blissful rest to praise and magnify him for ever: to whom with his blessed Son, the great Mediator and Prince of peace, and with his holy Spirit, the everflowing spring of all love, joy, comfort, and peace, be all honour, glory, and praise. And,

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXI.*

THE DUTY AND REWARD OF BOUNTY TO THE POOR.

PSALM cxii. 9.—*He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour.*

As this whole Psalm appears to have a double intent; one to describe the proper actions and affections of a truly religious or pious man (of a man *who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments:*)[a] the other to declare the happiness of such a man's state, consequent upon those his affections and actions, whether in way of natural result, or of gracious recompense from God: so doth this verse particularly contain both a good part of a pious man's character, and some considerable instances of his felicity. The first words (*He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor*) express part of his character; the latter (*his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour*) assign instances of his felicity. So that our text hath two parts, one affording us good information concerning our duty, the other yielding great encouragement to the performance

* This Sermon was preached at the Spital, upon Wednesday in Easter-week. A. D. 1671.

[a] Verse 1.

thereof; for we are obliged to follow the pious man's practice, and so doing we shall assuredly partake of his condition. These parts we shall in order prosecute, endeavouring (by God's assistance) somewhat to illustrate the words themselves, to confirm the truths couched in them, and to inculcate the duties which they imply.

For the first part, *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;* these words in general do import the liberal bounty and mercy which a pious man is wont to exercise; doing which doth in good part constitute him pious, and signally declareth him such: is a necessary ingredient of his piety, and a conspicuous mark thereof. But particularly they insinuate some things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the objects of those acts.

He hath dispersed, he hath given. Those words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is dispersed and given by him, may be supposed to imply a kind of universality in the matter of his beneficence; that he bestoweth whatever he hath within compass of his possession, or his power; his τὰ ὑπάρχοντα (the things which he hath), and his τὰ ἐνόντα, (the things which he may), according to the prescriptions of our Lord in the Gospel.[b] Every thing, I say, which he hath in substance, or can do by his endeavour, that may conduce to the support of the life, or the health, or the welfare in any kind of his neighbour, to the succour or relief of his indigency, to the removal or easement of his affliction, he may well here be understood to disperse and give. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, entertaining the stranger, ransoming the captive, easing the oppressed, comforting the sorrowful, assisting the weak, instructing or advising the ignorant, together with all such kinds or instances of beneficence, may be conceived either meant directly as the matter of the good man's dispersing and giving, or by just analogy of reason reducible thereto: substantial alms, as the most sensible and obvious matter of bounty, was (it is probable) especially intended, but thence no manner of expressing it is to be excluded; for the same reasons which oblige us, the same affections which dispose us to bestow our money, or deal our bread, will equally bind and move us to contribute our endeavour and advice, for the sustenance and comfort of our poor neighbour. Answerably our discourse will more expressly regard the principal matter, liberal communication of our goods; but it may be referred to all sorts of beneficence.

Further, the word *dispersed* intimateth the nature of his bounty, in exclusion of practices different from it. He *disperseth*, and is therefore not tenacious, doth not hoard up his goods, or keep them close to himself, for the gratifying his covetous humour, or nourishing his pride, or pampering his sensuality; but sendeth them abroad for the use and benefit of others. He *disperseth* his goods, and therefore doth not fling them away altogether, as if he were angry with them, or weary of them, as if he loathed or despised them; but fairly and softly with good consideration he disposeth of them here and there, as reason and need do require. He *disperseth* them *to the poor*, not dissipateth them among vain or lewd persons in wanton or wicked profusions, in riotous excesses, in idle divertisements, in expensive curiosities, in hazardous gamings, in any such courses which swallow whole all that a man hath, or do so cripple him, that he becomes unable to disperse any thing: our good man is to be understood wisely provident, honestly industrious, and soberly frugal, that he may have wherewith to be just first, and then liberal.*

His *dispersing* also (or *scattering*,[c] so the Hebrew word פזר here used is otherwhere rendered: *There is*, saith the Wise Man, *that scattereth, and yet increaseth:*[d] where we may remark, that this word singly by itself, without any adjunct matter to limit or interpret it, is used to signify this kind of practice. This his *dispersing*, I say, also) denotes the extent of the pious man's bounty, that it is very large and diffusive, and in a manner unrestrained; that it reacheth to many places, and is withheld from no persons within the verge of his power and op-

[b] Luke xii. 33; xi. 41.

* Οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε χρῆματ' ἔχειν, μὴ ἐπιμελούμενον, ὅπως ἔχῃ.—Arist. Eth. iv. 1.

[c] Eph. iv. 28. [d] Prov. xi. 24.

portunity to do good. This practice commonly by a like phrase (unto which perhaps this word refers) is termed *sowing*: *He* (saith St. Paul) *which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully.* Now, he that soweth, having chosen a good soil, and a fit season, doth not regard one particular spot, but throweth all about so much as his hand can hold, so far as the strength of his arm doth carry. It is likewise called *watering*: (*He that watereth*, saith Solomon, *shall be watered himself*:[a]) which expression also seemeth to import a plentiful and promiscuous effusion of good, dropping in showers upon dry and parched places; that is, upon persons dry for want, or parched with affliction. So the good man doth not plant his bounty in one small hole, or spout it on one narrow spot, but with an open hand disseminates it, with an impartial regard distils it all about. He stints it not to his own family or relations; to his neighbours, or friends, or benefactors; to those of his own sect and opinion, or of his humour and disposition; to such as serve him, or oblige him, or please him; whom some private interest ties, or some particular affection endears him to; but scatters it indifferently and unconfinedly toward all men that need it; toward mere strangers, yea, toward known enemies; toward such who never did him any good, nor can ever be able to do any; yea, even toward them who have done evil to him, and may be presumed ready to do more.* Nothing in his neighbour but absence of need, nothing in himself but defect of ability, doth curb or limit his beneficence. In that προθυμία (that proclivity and promptitude of mind) which St. Paul speaketh of, he doth good every where: wherever a man is, there is room for his wishing well, and doing good, if he can: he observes that rule of the Apostle, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.*[f] So the pious man hath *dispersed*. It follows,

* Ἐὰν ἴδῃς τινὰ κακῶς πάσχοντα, μηδὲν περιεργάζου λοιπόν· ἔχει τὸ δικαίωμα τῆς βοηθείας, τοῦ κακῶς παθεῖν αὐτόν·—τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι, κἂν Ἕλλην, κἂν Ἰουδαῖος.—Chrys. in Heb. Orat. 10.

[e] 2 Cor. ix. 6, 10; Gal. vi. 7, 8; Prov. xi. 18, 25.

[f] 2 Cor. viii. 12,—Ubicunque homo est, ibi beneficio locus est.—*Sen. de Vit. B.* cap. 24; Gal. vi. 10; 2 Cor. ix. 13.

He hath given to the poor. These words denote the freeness of his bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: he not only lendeth (though he also doth that upon reasonable occasion; for, *A good man* (as it is said before in this Psalm) *showeth mercy, and lendeth*;[g] and otherwhere, *The righteous is ever merciful, and lendeth*;[h] he, I say, not only sometimes willingly lendeth) to those who in time may repay, or requite him; but he freely giveth to the poor, that is, to those from whom he can expect no retribution back. He doth not (as good and pious, he doth not) present the rich:* to do so is but a cleanly way of begging, or a subtile kind of trade; it is hardly courtesy; it is surely no bounty; for such persons (if they are not very sordid or very careless, and such men are not usually much troubled with presents) will, it is likely, overdo him, or at least will be even with him in kindness. In doing this, there is little virtue; for it there will be small reward. For, *If you do good to them who do good to you* (or whom you conceive able and disposed to requite you,) ποία χάρις, *what thanks* are due to you? For that (saith our Saviour) *even sinners* (even men notoriously bad) *do the same: And if you lend to them from whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? For sinners even lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*[i] All men commonly, the bad no less than the good, are apt to be superfluously kind in heaping favours on those whom fortune befriends, and whose condition requires not their courtesy; every one almost is ready to adopt himself into the kindred, or to screw himself into the friendship of the wealthy and prosperous:† but where kindred is of use, there it is seldom found; it is commonly so deaf, as not to hear when it is called; so blind, as not to discern its proper object and natural season (*the time of adversity, for which a brother is born.*[j]) Men disclaim alliance with the needy, and shun his ac-

* Qui diviti donat, petit. He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want.—Prov. xxii. 16.

† Ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῷ, τί χρὴ φίλων; Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς ὠφελεῖν θέλων.—Eurip. in Orest. Τῶν εὐτυχούντων πάντες εἰσὶ συγγενεῖς.

[g] Psal. cxii. 5. [h] Psal. xxxvii. 26.

[i] Luke vi. 33, 34. [j] Prov. xvii. 17.

quaintance; so the Wise Man observed, *All the brethren of the poor do hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him?*[k] Thus it is in vulgar practice: but the pious man is more judicious, more just, and more generous in the placing of his favours; he is courteous to purpose, he is good to those who need.* He, as such, doth not make large entertainments *for his friends, his brethren, his kindred, his rich neighbours;* but observes that precept of our Lord, *When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*[l] Thus the pious man giveth, that is, with a free heart and pure intention bestoweth his goods on the indigent, without designing any benefit, or hoping for any requital to himself; except from God, in conscience, respect, and love to whom he doeth it.

It may be also material to observe the form of speech here used in reference to the time *He hath dispersed, and he hath given;* or, *He doth disperse, he doth give* (for in the Hebrew language the past and present times are not distinguished:) which manner of speaking may seem to intimate the reality, or the certainty, and the constancy of his practice in this kind; for what is past or present, we are infallibly secure of; and in morals, what one is said to have done, or to do, is always understood according to habit or custom. It is not, *He will disperse, he will give;* that were no fit description of a good man; to pretend to, would be no argument of piety; those words might import uncertainty, and delay in his practice. He that saith, *I will give*, may be fallacious in his professions, may be inconsistent with his resolutions, may wilfully or negligently let slip the due season of performing it. Our good man is not a *Doson*, or *Will-give* (like that king of Macedon, who got that name from often signifying an intention of giving, but never giving in effect †;) he not only purposes well, and promises fairly for the future, but he hath effectually done it, and perseveres doing it upon every fit occasion. He puts not his neighbour into tedious expectations, nor puts him off with frivolous excuses, saying to him (as it is in the Proverbs) *Go, and come again, and to-morrow, I will give*,[m] when he hath it by him: he bids him not have patience, or says unto him, *Depart in peace*,[n] when his need is urgent, and his pain impatient, when hunger or cold do then pinch him, when sickness incessantly vexeth him, when present straits and burdens oppress him; but he affordeth a ready, quick, and seasonable relief.

He hath dispersed, and *given*, while he lives, not reserving the disposal of all at once upon his death, or by his last will; that unwilling will, whereby men would seem to give somewhat, when they can keep nothing; drawing to themselves those commendations and thanks, which are only due to their mortality; whenas were they immortal, they would never be liberal: No; it is, *he hath freely dispersed;* not an inevitable necessity will extort it from him; it cannot be said of him, that he never does well, but when he dies;* so he hath done it really and surely.

He also doth it constantly, through all the course of his life, whenever good opportunity presents itself. He doth it not by fits, or by accident, according to unstable causes or circumstances moving him (when bodily temper or humour inclineth him, when a sad object makes vehement impression on him, when shame obligeth him to comply with the practice of others, when he may thereby promote some design, or procure some glory to himself), but his practice is constant and uniform, being drawn from steady principles, and guided by certain rules, proceeding from reverence to God, and good-will toward man, following the clear dictates and immutable laws of conscience. Thus hath the pious man *dispersed*, and *given to the poor:* and let thus much suffice for explicatory reflection upon the first words.

The main drift and purport of which is, to represent the liberal exercising of

* Εὖ πρίασε· τὰ φίλων δ' οὐδέν, ἢν τις δυστυχῇ.—Eurip.

† Ἐπεκλήθη δὲ Δώσων ὡς ἐπαγγελτικὸς μὲν οὐ τελεσιουργὸς δὲ τῶν ὑποσχέσεων.—Plut. in Paulo Æmil.

[k] Prov. xix. 7, 4.

[l] Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.

* Avarus, nisi cum moritur, nil recte facit.—*Laber.*

[m] Prov. iii. 28.

[n] James ii. 16.

bounty and mercy to be the necessary duty, the ordinary practice, and the proper character of a truly pious man; so that performing such acts is a good sign of true piety; and omitting them is a certain argument of ungodliness. For the demonstration of which points, and for exciting us to a practice answerable, I shall propound several considerations, whereby the plain reasonableness, the great weight, the high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its strict connection with other principal duties of piety, will appear. And first, I will show with what advantage the holy scripture represents it to us, or presses it upon us.

1*st. Head of Discourse.*—1. We may consider, that there is no sort of duties which God hath more expressly commanded, or more earnestly inculcated, than these of bounty and mercy toward our brethren: whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in God's esteem, may be inferred. Even in the ancient law, we may observe very careful provisions made for engaging men to works of this kind, and the performance of them is with huge life and urgency prescribed: *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.—Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, unto thy poor, and to thy needy in the land.*[o] So did Moses, in God's name, with language very significant and emphatical, enjoin to the children of Israel. The holy prophets also do commonly with an especial heat and vigour press these duties, most smartly reproving the transgression or neglect of them; especially when they reclaim men from their wicked courses, urging them seriously to return unto God and goodness, they propose this practice as a singular instance most expressive of their conversion, most apt to appease God's wrath, most effectual to the recovery of his favour. *Wash you*, saith God in Isaiah, *make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well.*[p] So in general he exhorts to repentance: then immediately he subjoins these choice instances thereof: *Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.—Come now*, then he adds, *let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*[q] When Daniel would prescribe to king Nebuchadnezzar the best way of amendment, and the surest means of averting God's judgments impendent on him, he thus speaks: *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee; break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.* * This he culled out as of all pious acts chiefly grateful to God, and clearly testifying repentance; and, *so very impious a person was alms able to justify*, says the Father thereupon.† So also, when God himself would declare what those acts are which render penitential devotions most agreeable to him, and most effectual, he thus expresseth his mind: *Is not this the fast which I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thine house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*[s] Of so great consideration and moment was this sort of duties, even under that old dispensation of weakness, servility, and fear; so much tenderness of compassion and benignity did God exact even from that hard-hearted and wordly people, who were so little capable of the best rules, and had encouragements, in comparison, so mean toward performances of this nature. The same we may well conceive, under the more perfect discipline of universal amity, of ingenuity, of spiritual grace and goodness, in a higher strain, with more force and greater obligation to be imposed on us, who have so much stronger engagements, and immensely greater encouragements to them. And so indeed it is: for those precepts delivered by our Lord, *Sell all that you have, amd give*

[o] Deut. xv. 7, 11. [p] Isa. i. 16, 17.

* Τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι: so the LXX. render those words, reading, it seems, פרת for פרק.

† Ναβουχοδονόσορ, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀσεβῆ, ἴσχυσεν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη δικαιῶσαι.—Athan. ad Antioch. Quæst. 87.

[q] Isa. i. 17, 18; Jer. vii. 5, 6.

[r] Dan. iv. 27. [s] Isa. lviii. 6, 7.

alms; If thou wilt be perfect sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor; Give to every man that asketh thee; Treasure not up to yourselves treasures upon the earth,[t] do indeed sound high, but are not so insignificant or impertinent. They cannot signify or design less, than that we should be always, in affection and disposition of mind, ready to part with any thing we have for the succour of our poor brethren; that to the utmost of our ability (according to moral estimation prudently rated) upon all occasions we should really express that disposition in our practice; that we are exceedingly obliged to the continual exercise of these duties in a very eminent degree. These indeed were the duties which our Lord, as he did frequently in his discourse commend and prescribe, so he did most signally exemplify in his practice; his whole life being in effect but one continual act of most liberal bounty and mercy toward mankind; in charity to whom he outdid his own severest rules, being content never to possess any wealth, never to enjoy any ease in this world. And therein (both as to doctrine and practice) did the holy apostles closely follow their Master: *As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.*[u] So they thoroughly in deeds practised these duties, which in words they taught and earnestly pressed; admonishing their converts to *distribute to the necessities of the saints, to do good to all men; to do good, and to communicate; not to forget; to show mercy with cheerfulness* to *put on bowels of mercy;* to *be kind and tender-hearted one toward another;* to *abound in the grace of liberality.*[v] Such are their directions and injunctions to all Christian people; so did they preach themselves and so they enjoined others to preach. *Charge the rich in this world,* (saith St. Paul to his scholar Timothy) *that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;*[w] and, *These things* (saith he likewise, advising Bishop Titus), *I will that thou affirm constantly that they which believe in God may be careful to maintain good works*: what *good works* he meaneth, the reason adjoined doth shew; *For these things* (saith he) *are good and profitable unto men.*[x]

2. It is indeed observable, that as in every kind that which is most excellent doth commonly assume to itself the name of the whole kind; so among the parts of righteousness (which word is used to comprehend all virtue and goodness) this of exercising bounty and mercy is peculiarly called *righteousness;* so that *righteousness* and *mercifulness* (or *alms-deeds*), the righteous and bountiful person, are in scripture expression ordinarily confounded, as it were, or undistinguishably put one for the other; it being often, when commendations are given to righteousness, and rewards promised to righteous persons, hard to discern, whether the general observance of God's law, or the special practice of these duties, are concerned in them. Likewise works of this nature are in way of peculiar excellency termed *good works;* and to perform them is usually styled, *to do good,* and *to do well;* (ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεσθαι, καλὸν ποιεῖν, ἀγαθοεργεῖν, ἀγαθοποιεῖν, εὐποιεῖν, εὐεργετεῖν,[y] are words applied to this purpose;) which manners of expression do argue the eminent dignity of these performances.

3. We may also consequently mark, that in those places of scripture where the divine law is abridged, and religion summed up into a few particulars of main importance, these duties constantly make a part: so when the prophet Micah briefly reckons up those things which are best in the law, and chiefly required by God, the whole catalogue of them consisting but of three particulars, *mercy* comes in for one: *He that showed thee, O man* (saith he), *what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*[z] Likewise of those (βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου, those) more substantial and *weighty things of God's law,* the neglect of which our

[t] Luke xii. 33; vi. 30; xi. 41; Matt. xix. 21; vi. 19.
[u] 2 Cor. vi. 10.
[v] Rom. xii. 13; Gal. vi. 10; Heb. xiii. 16; Coloss. iii. 12; Eph. iv. 32; 2 Cor. viii. 7.
[w] 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.
[x] Tit. iii. 8.
[y] Acts ix. 36; 1 Tim. v. 10; vi. 18; Tit. iii. 8, 14; 2 Cor. ix. 8; Gal. vi. 9, 10; Luke vi. 35; Heb. xiii. 16; Acts x. 38.
[z] Micah vi. 8.

Saviour objects as an argument of impiety, and a cause of wo, to those pretending zealots, this is one: *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.*[a] The sum of St. John the Baptist's instruction of the people is by St. Luke reduced to this point: *The people asked him, saying, What shall we do?* He answering saith unto them, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.*[b] St. James's system of religion is this: *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction* (that is, to comfort and relieve all distressed and helpless persons), *and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*[c] St. Paul seems to be yet more compendious and close: *Bear ye* (saith he) *one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*[d] Yea, God himself compriseth all the substantial part of religion herein, when, comparing it with the circumstantial part, he saith, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*[e]

4. It is in like manner considerable, that in the general descriptions of piety and goodness, the practice of these duties is specified as a grand ingredient of them. In this Psalm, where such a description is intended, it is almost the only particular instance; and it is not only mentioned, but reiterated in divers forms of expression. In the 37th Psalm it is affirmed and repeated, that *the righteous showeth mercy; he showeth mercy, and giveth; he showeth mercy, and lendeth.*[f] In the Proverbs it is a commendation of the virtuous woman, *whose price is far above rubies*, that *she stretcheth out her hands to the poor, yea, stretched forth both her hands to the needy.*[g] And in Ezekiel (which is especially remarkable), the 18th chapter, where the principal things constituting a pious man are more than once professedly enumerated, this among a very few other particulars is expressed, and taketh up much room in the account; of such a person (who *shall surely live, and not die*, that is, who certainly shall abide in God's favour, and enjoy the happy consequences thereof) it is supposed, that he *neither hath oppressed any, nor hath withholden the pledge, nor hath spoiled by violence; but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, and hath taken off his hand from the poor.*[h]

5. Also in the particular histories of good men, this sort of practice is specially taken notice of, and expressed in their characters. In the story of our father Abraham, his benignity to strangers, and hospitableness, is remarkable among all his deeds of goodness, being propounded to us as a pattern and encouragement to the like practice.[i] In this the conscience of Job did solace itself, as in a solid assurance of his integrity: *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame; I was a father to the poor. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?*[j] Hence also did the good publican recommend himself to the favour and approbation of our Savour, saying, *Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor:* hence did *salvation* come to his *house:* hence he is proclaimed, *a son of Abraham.*[k] Of Dorcas, that good woman, who was so gracious and precious among the disciples, this is the commendation and character; *She was full of good works and almsdeeds, which she did:*[l] such practice made her capable of that favour, so great and extraordinary, the being restored to life; at least in St. Chrysostom's judgment: *the force of her alms* (saith he) *did conquer the tyranny of death.*[*] Cornelius also, that excellent person, who was, though a Gentile, so acceptable to God, and had so extraordinary graces conferred on him, is thus represented:

[a] Matt. xxiii. 23.
[b] Luke iii. 10, 11.
[c] James i. 27.
[d] Gal. vi. 2.
[e] Hos. vi. 6.
[f] Psal. xxxvii. 21, 26,—The righteous giveth, and spareth not.—Prov. xxi. 26.
[g] Prov. xxxi. 20.

[*] Ἡ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης δύναμις ἐνίκησε θανάτου τὴν τυραννίδα.—Chrys. in Gen. Orat. 55.
[h] Ezek. xviii. 7, 16.
[i] Heb xiii. 2.
[j] Job xxix. 12, 13, 15, 16; xxx. 25.
[k] Luke xix. 8, 9.
[l] Acts ix. 36.

He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.[m] We may add, that to be hospitable (one branch of these duties, and inferring the rest) is reckoned a qualification of those who are to be the guides and patterns of goodness unto others.[n] And particularly, one fit to be promoted to a widow's office in the church is thus described: *Well reported of for good works: if she have brought up children; if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints' feet; if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every good work.*[o]

6. So near to the heart of piety doth the holy Scripture lay the practice of these duties: and no wonder; for it often expressly declares charity to be the fulfilling of God's law, as the best expression of all our duty toward God, of faith in him, love and reverence of him, and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty toward our neighbour.[p] And of charity, works of bounty and mercy are both the chief instances and the plainest signs; for whereas all charity doth consist either in mental desire, or in verbal signification, or in effectual performance of good to our neighbour; this last is the end, the completion, and the assurance of the rest. Goodwill is indeed the root of charity;* but that lies under ground, and out of sight; nor can we conclude its being or life without visible fruits of beneficence. Good words are at best but fair leaves thereof, such as may, and too often do, proceed from a weak and barren disposition of mind. But these *good works* are *real fruits*, (so St. Paul calls them: *Let ours also* saith he, *learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.*) which declare a true life, and a good strength of charity in the bearer of them; by them τὸ γνήσιον τῆς ἀγάπης, *the sincerity* (or genuineness) *of our charity is proved.*[r] For as no man ever doth impress a false stamp on the finest metal; so costly charity is seldom counterfeit. It is to decline spending their goods or their pains, that men forge and feign; pretending to make up in wishing well, the defect of doing so, and paying words instead of things: but he that freely imparts what he hath, or can do for his neighbour's good, needs no other argument to evince that he loves in good earnest, nor can indeed well use any other: for words, if actions are wanting, seem abusive; and if actions are present, they are superfluous. Wherefore St. John thus advises: *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue* (ἀλλ' ἐργῳ) *but in work and in truth.*[s] To love in *work*, and to love in *truth*, he signifies to be the same thing; and to pretend love in speech, without practising it in deed, he implies not allowable. And St. James in way of comparison says, that as faith without works is dead, so love without beneficence is useless. For, *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith without works is dead.*[t] Cold wishes of good, working no real benefit to our neighbour, and a faint assent unto truth, producing no constant obedience to God, are things near of kin, and of like value; both of little worth or use. Charity, then, being the main point of religion, mercy and bounty being the chief parts of charity, well may these duties be placed in so high a rank, according to the divine heraldry of scripture.

7. To enforce which observations, and that we may be further certified about the weight and worth of these duties, we may consider, that to the observance of them most ample and excellent rewards are assigned; that, in return for what we bestow on our poor brethren, God hath promised all sorts of the best mercies and blessings to us. The best of all good things (that which in David's opinion was better than life itself), the fountain of all blessings (God's love and favour, or mercy), is procured thereby, or is annexed to it.[u] For, *God loveth a*

* Ἐντεῦθεν ἀγάπης ὁ τόκος.—Greg. Nyss. in Matt. v. 7.

[m] Acts x. 2. [n] 1 Tim. iii. 2, Tit. i. 8.
[o] 1 Tim. v. 10.
[p] Gal. v. 14; Rom. xiii. 9, 10; 1 Tim. i. 5; Matt. vii. 12.
[q] Tit. iii. 14; Rom. xv. 28; Phil. iv. 17.
[r] 2 Cor. viii. 8.
[s] 1 John iii. 18. [t] James ii. 15, 16, 17.
[u] Psal. lxiii. 3.

cheerful giver, saith St. Paul; and, *The merciful shall obtain mercy*, saith our Saviour; and, *Mercy rejoiceth against judgment*,[v] (or boasteth, or triumpheth over it; ἔλεος κατακαυχᾶται κρίσεως: that is, it appeaseth God's wrath, and prevents our condemnation and punishment), saith St. James; God will not continue displeased with him, nor will withhold his mercy from him, who is kind and merciful to his neighbour.[w] It is true, if rightly understood, what the Hebrew Wise Man saith, *Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement for sins*.[x] For this practice hath the nature and name of a sacrifice, and is declared as such both in excellency and efficacy to surpass all other sacrifices; to be most acceptable to God, most available for expiation of guilt, most effectual in obtaining mercy and favour. Other sacrifices performed in obedience to God's appointment (on virtue of our Lord's perfect obedience, and with regard to his pure sacrifice of himself), did in their way propitiate God, and atone sin: but this hath an intrinsic worth, and a natural aptitude to those purposes. Other obligations did signify a willingness to render a due homage to God: this really and immediately performs it. They were shadows or images well resembling that duty (parting with any thing we have for the sake of God, and for purchasing his favour), whereof this is the body and substance. This is therefore preferred, as in itself excelling the rest, and more estimable in God's sight; so that in comparison or petition therewith, the other seem to be slighted and rejected. *I will* (saith God) *have mercy, and not sacrifice*:[y] and, *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?*[z] Will he? that is, he will not be pleased with such sacrifices, if they be abstracted from the more delightful sacrifices of bounty and mercy. God never made an exception against these, or derogated from them in any case: they absolutely and perpetually are, as St. Paul speaketh, *odours of a sweet smell, sacrifices acceptable and well pleasing to God*.[a] And the apostle to the Hebrews seconds him: *To do good* (saith he) *and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*.[b] By these, all other works and all enjoyments are sanctified: for, *Give alms* (saith our Lord) *of what ye have; and behold, all things are pure unto you*.[c] Such charitable persons are therefore frequently pronounced blessed, that is, in effect, instated in a confluence of all good things. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor*, says the Psalmist; and, *He that hath a bountiful eye is blessed*, saith Solomon; and, *He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he*,[d] saith the Wise Man again; and, *Blessed are the merciful*,[e] saith our Lord himself. So in gross and generally. Particularly also and in detail, the greatest blessings are expressly allotted to this practice; prosperity in all our affairs is promised thereto. *Thou* (saith Moses) *shalt surely give thy poor brother, and thine heart shall not be grieved that thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto*.[f] Stability in a good condition is ordinarily consequent thereon: so the prophet Daniel implies, when, advising king Nebuchadnezzar to these works, he adds, *If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity*.[g] Deliverance from evil incumbent, protection in imminent danger, and support in afflictions, are the sure rewards thereof: so the Psalmist assures us: *Blessed* (saith he) *is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness*.[h] Security from all want is likewise a recompense proper thereto: for, *He that giveth to the poor shall not lack*, saith the Wise Man. *If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light arise in obscurity*,[i] &c. Thriving in

[v] 2 Cor. ix. 7; Matt. v. 7; James ii. 13.
[w] Matt. vi. 14.
[x] Ecclus. iii. 30,—Si nudum vestias, teipsum induis justitiam.—*Ambr. Offic.* i. 11. *Hier. in Psalm* cxxxvii. *Chrys.* tom. v. Orat. 55.
[y] Hos. vi. 6. [z] Micah vi. 7.
[a] Phil. iv. 18. [b] Heb. xiii. 16.
[c] Luke xi. 41.
[d] Psal. xli. 1; Prov. xxii. 9; xiv. 21.
[e] Matt. v. 7. [f] Deut. xv. 10.
[g] Dan. iv. 27. [h] Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3.
[i] Prov. xxviii. 27; Isa. lviii. 10, 11, 12.

wealth and estate is another special reward: for, *The liberal soul shall be made fat;*[j] the same author gives us his word for it. Even of the good things here below, to those who for his sake in this or any other way do *let go houses or lands*, our Lord promiseth the return of *a hundred-fold*,[k] either in kind or in value. So great encouragements are annexed to this practice even in relation to the concernments of this transitory life; but to them beside God hath destinated rewards incomparably more considerable and precious, spiritual and eternal rewards, treasures of heavenly wealth, crowns of endless glory, the perfection of joy and bliss, to be dispensed *at the resurrection of the just. He that for my sake hath left houses or lands, shall receive a hundred-fold now at this time* (or in this present life), *and in the world to come shall inherit everlasting life;*[l] so infallible truth hath assured us. They who perform these duties are said to *make themselves bags which wax not old, a treasure that faileth not in the heavens; to make themselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, who, when they fail* (when they depart, and leave their earthly wealth), *will receive them into everlasting habitations;* to *lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*[m] Such rewards are promised to the observers.

8. And correspondently grievous punishments are designed and denounced to the transgressors of these duties; the worst of miseries is their portion and doom: they, for being such, do forfeit God's love and favour; they lose his blessing and protection; they can have no sure possession, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their estate; for, *He* (saith St. James) *shall have judgment without mercy, who showeth no mercy.* And of such a person it is said in Job, *That which he laboureth for he shall restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein; because he hath oppressed, and forsaken the poor.*[n] (Not only because he hath unjustly oppressed, but because he hath uncharitably forsaken the poor.) If by the divine forbearance such persons do seem to enjoy a fair *portion in this life* (*prospering in the world, and increasing in riches,*) they will find a sad reckoning behind in the other world: this will be the result of that audit; *Woe be unto you, rich men, for ye have received your consolation;*[p] (such rich men are meant, who have got, or kept, or used their wealth basely; who have detained all the consolation it yields to themselves, and imparted none to others;) and, *Remember, son, thou didst receive thy good things in this life* (so didst receive them, as to swallow them, and spend them here, without any provision or regard for the future in the use of them;) and, *Cast that unprofitable servant* (who made no good use of his talent) *into utter darkness.* Such will be the fate of *every one that treasures up to himself, and is not rich unto God;*[q] not rich in piety and charity, not rich in performing for God's sake works of bounty and mercy.

9. It is indeed most considerable, that at the final reckoning, when all men's actions shall be strictly scanned, and justly sentenced according to their true desert, a special regard will be had to the discharge or neglect of these duties. It is the bountiful and merciful persons, who have relieved Christ in his poor members and brethren, who in that day will appear to be the sheep at the right hand, and shall hear the good Shepherd's voice uttering those joyful words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom perpared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*[r] He doth not say, because you have made goodly professions, because you have been orthodox in your opinions, because you have frequented religious exercises (have prayed often and long, have kept many fasts, and heard many sermons,) because you have been staunch in

[j] Prov. xi. 25.
[k] Matt. xix. 29.
[l] Luke xiv. 14; Matt. xix. 29; Mark x. 29, 30.
[m] Luke xii. 33; 1 Tim. vi. 19.
[n] James ii. 13; Job xx. 18, 19.
[o] Psal. xvii. 14; lxxiii. 12.
[p] Luke vi. 24.
[q] Luke xvi. 25; Matt. xxv. 30; Luke xii. 21.
[r] Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36.

your conversations, because you have been punctual in your dealings, because you have maintained a specious guise of piety; sobriety, and justice (although, indeed, he that will come off well at that great trial, must be responsible, and able to yield a good account in respect to all those particulars;) but because you have been charitably benign and helpful to persons in need and distress, therefore blessed are you, therefore enter into the kingdom of glorious bliss prepared for such persons. This proceeding more than intimates, that, in the judgment of our Lord, no sort of virtue or good practice is to be preferred before that of charitable bounty; or rather that, in his esteem, none is equal thereto: so that if the question were put to him, which is one of them to Antiochus (in Athanasius' works[s]) which is the most eminent virtue? our Lord would resolve it no otherwise than is done by that Father, affirming, that, mercifulness is the queen of virtues; for that, at the final account, the examination chiefly proceeds upon that; it is made the special touchstone of piety, and the peculiar ground of happiness. On the other side, those who have been deficient in these performances (uncharitable and unmerciful persons) will at the last trial appear to be the wretched goats on the left hand, unto whom this uncomfortable speech shall by the great Judge be pronounced: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.*[t] It is not, we may see, for having done that which in this world is called rapine or wrong, for having pillaged or cozened their neighbour, for having committed adultery or murder, or any other thing prohibited, that these unhappy men are said to be formally impeached, and finally condemned to that miserable doom; but for having been unkind and unmerciful to their poor brethren:* this at that high tribunal will pass for a most enormous crime, for the capital offence; for this it is that they shall be cursed, and cast down into a wretched consortship with those malicious and merciless fiends, unto whose disposition they did so nearly approach.

Thus it appears how mighty a stress God in the holy Scripture doth lay upon these duties, so peremptorily commanding them, so vehemently pressing them, so highly commending them, so graciously by promises alluring us to the performance, so dreadfully by threatenings deterring us from the neglect of them. What an affront then will it be to God's authority, what a distrust to his word, what a contempt of his power, his justice, his wisdom, what a despite to his goodness and mercy, if, notwithstanding all these declarations of his will and purposes, we shall presume to be uncharitable in this kind! There are also considerations (very many, very clear, and very strong), which discover the great reasonableness and equity of these laws, with our indispensible obligation to obey them; the which indeed with greater force do exact these duties from us, and do more earnestly plead in the poor man's behalf, than he can beg or cry. If we either look up unto God, or down upon our poor neighbour, if we reflect upon ourselves, or consider our wealth itself, every where we may discern various reasons obliging us, and various motives inducing us to the practice of these duties.

2d Head of Discourse.—In regard to God.

1. We may consider, that by exercising of bounty and mercy, we are kind and courteous to God himself; by neglecting those duties, we are unkind and rude to him: for that what of good or evil is by us done to the poor, God interprets and accepts as done to himself. The poor have a peculiar relation to God; he openly and frequently professeth himself their especial friend, patron, and protector; he is much concerned in, and particularly chargeth his providence with their support. In effect, therefore, they shall surely be provided for, one way or other; (*The poor shall eat and be satis-*

* Οὐκ ὅτι διηρπάκασιν, οὐδ' ὅτι σεσολήκασιν, οὐ μεμοιχεύκασιν, ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων πεπαιήκασιν, ταύτην τὴν τάξιν κατακριθέντες, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ Χριστὸν διὰ τῶν δεομένων τεθεραπεύκασιν.—Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

[s] Athanasius, tom. ii.

[t] Matt. xxv. 41, 42, 43

fied: God will save the afflicted people: The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and widow. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them:[u] but out of goodness to us, he chooseth (if it may be, we freely concurring therein), and best liketh, that it should be done by our hands; this conducing no less to our benefit, than to theirs; we thereby having opportunity to show our respect to himself, and to lay an engagement on him to do us good. God therefore lendeth the poor man his own name, and alloweth him to crave our succour for his sake. (When the poor man asketh us in God's name, or for God's sake, he doth not usurp or forge, he hath good authority, and a true ground for doing so:) God gives him credit from himself unto us for what he wants, and bids us charge what he receiveth on his own account; permitting us to reckon him obliged thereby, and to write him our debtor; engaging his own word and reputation duly to repay, fully to satisfy us. *He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again*, saith the Wise Man: and, *Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me*, saith our Saviour: and, *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister*, saith the apostle.[v] What, therefore, we give to the poor, God accepteth as an expression of kindness to himself, being given to one of his friends and clients in respect to him; he regards it as a testimony of friendly confidence in him, signifying that we have a good opinion of him, that we take him for able and willing to requite a good turn, that we dare take his word, and think our goods safe enough in his custody. But if we stop our ears, or shut our hands from the poor, God interprets it as a harsh repulse, and an heinous affront put upon himself: we doing it to one who bears his name, and wears his livery (for the poor man's rags are badges of his relation unto God,) he thereby judges that we have little good-will, little respect, little compassion toward himself: since we vouchsafe not to grant him so mean a favour, since we refuse at his request, and (as it were) in his need, to accommodate him with a small sum, he justly reputes it as an argument of unkindly diffidence in him, that we have sorry thoughts of him, deeming him no good correspondent, little valuing his word, suspecting his goodness, his truth, or his sufficiency.

2. We by practising those duties are just, by omitting them are very unjust, toward God. For our goods, our wealth, and our estate, are indeed none of them simply or properly our own, so that we have an absolute property in them, or an entire disposal of them: no, we are utterly incapable of such a right unto them, or power over them: God necessarily is the true and absolute proprietary of them. They are called the gifts of God: but we must not understand that God, by giving them to us, hath parted with his own right to them:[w] they are deposited with us in trust, not alienated from him; they are committed to us as stewards, not transferred upon us as masters: they are so ours, that we have no authority to use them according to our will or fancy, but are obliged to manage them according to God's direction and order. He, by right immutable, is Lord paramount of all his creation; every thing unalienably belongs to him upon many accounts. He out of nothing made all things at first, and to every creature through each moment a new being is conferred by his preservative influence: originally, therefore, he is Lord of all things, and continually a new title of dominion over every thing springeth up unto him: it is his always, because he always maketh it. We ourselves are naturally mere slaves and vassals to him: as we can never be our own, (masters of ourselves, of our lives, of our liberties), so cannot we ever properly be owners of any thing; there are no possible means, by which we can acquire any absolute title to the least mite; the principal right to what we seem to get, according to all law and reason, ac-

[u] Psal. xxii. 26; xviii. 27; cxlvi. 9; Isa. xli. 17.

[v] Prov. xix. 17; Matt. xxv. 40, 45; Heb. vi. 10.

[w] Eccles. v. 19; vi. 2.

crueth to our master. All things about us, by which we live, by which we work and trade, the earth which supports and feeds and furnisheth us with all commodities, the air we breathe, the sun and stars which cherish our life, are all of them his, his productions and his possessions, subsisting by his pleasure, subject to his disposal.[x] How then can any thing be ours? How can we say, with the foolish churl Nabal, *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, and give it?*[y] Thine? O inconsiderate man! How camest thou by it? how dost thou hold it? Didst thou make it? or dost thou preserve it? Canst thou claim any thing by nature? No; thou broughtest nothing with thee into the world; thou didst not bring thyself hither.* Canst thou challenge any thing to thyself from chance? No, for there is no such thing as chance, all things being guided and governed by God's providence. Dost thou conceive thy industry can entitle thee to any thing? Thou art mistaken; for all the wit and strength thou appliest, the head thou contrivest with, and the hands thou workest with, are God's; all the success thou findest did wholly depend on him, was altogether derived from him; all thy projects were vain, all thy labours would be fruitless, did not he assist and bless thee. Thou dost vainly and falsely *lift up thine heart, and forget the Lord thy God, whenas thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy silver and gold is multiplied, and all thou hast is multiplied; if thou sayest in thy heart, My power, and the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth. But thou must remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth the power to get wealth.*[z] [—*Who am I* (saith David,) *and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee; and of thine own have we given thee.* 1 Chron. xxix. 14.] Since, then, upon all scores, every thing we have doth appertain to God, he may without any injury recall or resume whatever he pleaseth; and while he letteth any thing abide with us, we cannot justly use it otherwise than he hath appointed, we cannot duly apply it otherwise than to his interest and service.* God, then, having enjoined, that after we have satisfied our necessities, and supplied our reasonable occasions, we should employ the rest to the relief of our poor neighbours; that *if we have two coats* (one more than we need) *we should impart one to him that hath none; if we have meat* abundant, that we *likewise* communicate to him that wants it:† God, by the poor man's voice (or by his need and misery), demanding his own from us, we are very unjust if we presume to withhold it; doubly unjust we are, both toward God and toward our neighbour: we are unfaithful stewards, misanplying the goods of our Master, and crossing his order:‡ we are wrongful usurpers, detaining from our neighbour that which God hath allotted him; we are in the court of conscience; we shall appear at the bar of God's judgment no better than robbers (under vizards of legal right and possession), spoiling our poor brother of his goods; his, I say, by the very same title as any thing can be ours, by the free donation of God, fully and frequently expressed, as we have seen, in his holy word. (He cannot take it away by violence, or surreption against our will, but we are bound willingly to yield it up to him; to do that, were disorder in him; to refuse this, is wrong in us.) 'Tis the hungry man's bread which we hoard up in our barns, 'tis his meat on which we glut, and his drink which we guzzle:§ 'tis the naked man's apparel which we shut up in our presses, or which we exorbitantly ruffle

* Sed ais, Quid injustum est, si cum aliena non invadam, propria diligentius servem? O impudens dictum! propria dicis? quæ? ex quibus reconditis in hunc mundum detulisti?—*Ambros.*

[x] Psal. xxiv. 1; l. 12; lxxxix. 11; xcv. 5.

[y] 1 Sam. xxv. 11.

[z] Deut. viii. 13, 14, 17, 18.

* Aliena rapere convincitur, qui ultra necessaria sibi retineri probatur.—*Hieron.*

† Quicquid Deus plusquam opus est dederit, non nobis specialiter dedit, sed per nos aliis erogandum transmisit; quod si non dederimus, res alienas invasimus.—*Aug. Serm.* 219. *de Temp.*

Proprium nemo dicat quod commune; plus quam sufficeret sumptui violenter obtentum est.—*Ambros.*

‡ Ἐὰν δὲ οὐκ ἀποστερητὴς, ἃ πρὸς οἰκονομίαν ἐδέξω, ταῦτα ἴδια σαυτοῦ ποιούμενος;—Bas. M.

§ Nostrum est (pauperes clamant) quod effundimus; nobis crudelitur subtrahitur, quod inaniter expenditur.—*Bern. Ep.* 42.

* Luke iii. 11.

and flaunt in: 'tis the needy person's gold and silver which we closely hide in our chests, or spend idly, or put out to useless use. We are, in thus holding, or thus spending, truly πλεονέκται, not only covetous, but wrongful, or havers of more than our own, against the will of the right owners; plainly violating that precept of Solomon, *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.*[b] If we are ambitious of having a property in somewhat, or affect to call any thing our own, 'tis only by nobly giving that we can accomplish our desire; that will certainly appropriate our goods to our use and benefit: but from basely keeping, or vainly embezzling them, they become not our possession and enjoyment, but our theft and our bane.* (These things, spoken after the holy fathers, wise instructors in matters of piety, are to be understood with reasonable temperament, and practised with honest prudence. I cannot stand to discuss cases, and remove scruples; a pious charity will easily discern its due limits and measures, both declining perplexity, and not evading duty. The sum is, that justice towards God and man obligeth us not to suffer our poor brother to perish, or pine away for want, when we surfeit and swim in plenty, or not to see him lack necessaries, when we are well able to relieve him.)

3. Showing bounty and mercy are the most proper and the principal expressions of our gratitude unto God; so that in omitting them, we are not only very unjust, but highly ungrateful. Innumerable are the benefits, favours, and mercies (both common and private), which God hath bestowed on us, and doth continually bestow: he incessantly showers down blessings on our heads; *he daily loadeth us with his benefits;* he perpetually *croweneth us with long kindness and tender mercies:*[c] all that we are, all that we have, all that we can hope for of good, is alone from his free bounty: our beings and lives, with all the conveniences and comforts of them, we entirely owe to him as to our Maker, our Preserver, our constant Benefactor: all the excellent privileges we enjoy, and all the glorious hopes we have as Christians, we also stand indebted for purely to his undeserved mercy and grace. And, *What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward us?*[d] Shall we render him nothing? Shall we refuse him anything? Shall we boggle at making returns so inconsiderable, in regard to what he hath done for us? What is a little gold or silver, or brass perhaps, which our poor neighbour craveth of us, in comparison to our life, our health, our reason; to all accommodations of our body, and all endowments of our mind? What are all the goods in the world to the love and favour of God, to the pardon of our sins, to the gifts of God's Spirit, to the dignity of being the children of God and heirs of salvation; to the being freed from extreme miseries, and made capable of eternal felicity? And doth not this unexpressible goodness, do not all these inestimable benefits, require some correspondent thankfulness? Are we not obliged, shall we not be willing to exhibit some real testimony thereof? And what other can we exhibit beside this? We cannot directly or immediately requite God, for he cannot so receive any thing from us; he is not capable of being himself enriched or exalted, of being anywise pleasured or bettered by us, who is in himself infinitely sufficient, glorious, joyful, and happy: *Our goodness extends not to him; a man cannot be profitable to his Maker.*[e] All that we can do in this kind is thus indirectly, in the persons of his poor relations, to gratify him, imparting at his desire, and for his sake, somewhat of what he hath bestowed on us upon them. Such a thankful return we owe unto God, not only for what he hath given us, but even for the capacity of giving to others; for that we are in the number of those who can afford relief, and who need not to demand it. Our very wealth and prosperous state should not seem to us so contemptible things, that we should be unwilling to render somewhat back in grateful resentment for them: the very

* Omne quod male possidetur alienum est: male autem possidet, qui male utitur.—*August. Ep.* 54.

[b] Prov. iii. 27.

[c] Psal. lxviii. 19; ciii. 4.

[d] Psal. cxvi. 12.

[e] Psal. xvi. 2; Job xxii. 2.

act of giving is itself no mean benefit (having so much of honour in it, so much of pleasure going with it, so much of reward following it;) we receive far more than we return in giving; for which therefore it is fit that we should return our gratitude, and consequently that we should perform these duties.* For indeed, without this practice, no other expression of gratitude can be true in itself, or can be acceptable to God. We may seem abundantly to thank him in words; but a sparing hand gives the lie to the fullest mouth: we may spare our breath, if we keep back our substance; for all our praising God for his goodness, and blessing him with our lips, if we will do nothing for him, if we will not part with anything for his sake, appears mere compliment; is, in truth, plain mockery and vile hypocrisy:

4. Yea, which we may further consider, all our devotion severed from a disposition of practising these duties, is no less such; cannot have any true worth in it, shall not yield any good effect from it. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably disposed, what are they other than demonstrations of egregious impudence and folly? For how can we with any face presume to ask any thing from God, when we deny him requesting a small matter from us? How can we with any reason expect any mercy from him, when we vouchsafe not to show any mercy for his sake? Can we imagine that God will hearken unto, or mind our petitions, when we are deaf to his entreaties, and regardless of his desires? No; *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.*[f] 'Tis his declaration to such bold and unreasonable petitioners, *When you spread forth your hands, I will not hear you; when you make many prayers, I will not hear.*[g] No importunity, no frequency of prayers, will move God in such a case; the needy man's cries and complaints will drown their noise; his sighs and groans will obstruct their passage, and stop the ears of God against them.[h] Likewise all our semblances of repentance, all our corporal abstinences and austerities, if a kind and merciful disposition are wanting, what are they truly but presumptuous dallyings, or impertinent triflings with God? For do we not grossly collude with sin, when we restrain the sensual appetites of the body, but foment the soul's more unreasonable desires; when we curb our wanton flesh, and give license to a base spirit? Do we not palpably baffle, when in respect to God we pretend to deny ourselves, yet upon urgent occasion allow him nothing?* Do we not strangely prevaricate, when we would seem to appease God's anger, and purchase his favour by our submissions, yet refuse to do that which he declares most pleasing to him, and most necessary to those purposes? It is an ordinary thing for men thus to serve God, and thus to delude themselves: *I have known many* (saith St. Basil) *who have fasted, and prayed, and groaned, and expressed all kind of costless piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted.*† Such a cheap and easy piety, which costs us little or nothing, can surely not be worth much; and we must not conceit, that the all-wise God (*the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed*, as Anna sang, and who *weigheth the spirits* also, as the Wise Man saith) will be cheated therewith, or take it for more than its just value.[i] No; he hath expressly signified, that he hath *not chosen* such services, nor doth take any pleasure in them: he hath called them *vain and impertinent oblations*; not *sweet* or *acceptable*, but *abominable* and *troublesome* to him, such as he *cannot away with*, and *is weary to bear.*[k] 'Tis *religious liberality* that doth prove

* Δός τι Θεῷ χαριστήριον, ὅτι τῶν εὖ ποιεῖν δυναμένων ἐγένου, ἀλλ' οὐ τῶν εὖ παθεῖν δεομένων.—Naz.

—— τὸν φιλάνθρωπον ὑμνῆσαι δεσπότην, ὅτι τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις ἡμᾶς σωφρονίζει παθήμασι, καὶ οὐχ ἡμᾶς εἰς ἑτέρων παροπτεύειν οἰκίας, ἀλλ' εἰς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἄλλους ἤγαγε θύρας.—Theod. Ep. 30.

Εἰ δὲ μὴ νομίζεις λαμβάνειν μᾶλλον, ἢ διδόναι, μὴ παρίσχῃς.—Chrysost. tom. v. Orat. 54.

Nec enim homo Deo præstat beneficium in his quæ dederit, sed Deus his homini quæ acceperit.—*Salvian.*

[f] Prov. xxi. 13. [g] Isa. i. 15

† Πολλοὺς νηστεύοντας, προσευχομένους, στενάζοντας, πίσαν τὴν ἀλάστανον εὐλάβειαν ἐνδεικνυμένους, ὀβολὸν δὲ ἕνα μὴ προϊεμένους τοῖς θλιβομένοις.—Bas. M. in Luc. xii. 8.

[h] James v. 4; Eccles. iv. 4, 5, 6.

[i] 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

[j] 1 Sam. ii. 3; Prov. xvi. 2.

[k] Isa. lviii. 5; i. 13, 14; Mic. vi. 6, 7; Jer. vi. 20

us to be serious and earnest in other *religious performances;* which assures that we value matters of piety at a considerable rate; which gives a substance and solidity to our devotions; which sanctifies our fasts, and verifies our penances; which renders our praises real, and our prayers effectual; so that these being combined, we may reasonably expect acceptance and recompense; and in effect to hear that from God, which by him was returned to good Cornelius. *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*[l]

5. The conscionable practice of these duties doth plainly spring from those good dispositions of mind regarding God, which are the original grounds and fountains of all true piety; and the neglect of them issueth from those vicious dispositions which have a peculiar inconsistency with piety, being destructive thereof in the very foundation and root. Faith in God is the fundamental grace upon which piety is grounded; love and fear of God are the radical principles from which it grows: all which, as the charitable man discovers in his practice, so they are apparently banished from the heart of the illiberal and unmerciful person.

As for faith, the good man, in showing bounty, exerciseth the chief act thereof; he freely parteth with his goods, because he trusteth on God's providence more than on them, and believeth God more ready to help him, than any creature can do, in his need; because he is persuaded that God is most good and benign, so as never to suffer him to be oppressed with want; because he taketh God to be just and faithful, who, having charged him *to care for nothing*, but *to cast his care and burden upon the Lord*, having promised *to care for him*, to *sustain him*, *never* to *leave or forsake him*,[m] having also engaged himself to repay and recompense him for what he giveth to his poor neighbour, will not fail to make good his word; because he thinks God abundantly solvent, and himself never the poorer for laying out in his behalf; because, in short, he is content to live in a dependence upon God, and at his disposal. It is mentioned by the apostle to the Hebrews, as a special instance of a resolute and constant faith in the first Christians, that *they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*[n] He that not forcibly by the violent rapacity of others, but voluntarily by his own free resignation for the service of God, delivereth them up with the same alacrity, opinion, and hope, thereby demonstrates the same faith. But the *gripple wretch*, who will bestow nothing on his poor brother for God's sake, is evidently an infidel, having none at all, or very heathenish conceits of God. He must be either a mere atheist, disbelieving the existence of God; or an epicurean, in his heart denying God's providence over human affairs;* (for did he conceive God to have any regard unto, or any influence over what passes here, how could he be afraid of wanting upon this score? how could he repose any confidence in these possessions? how could he think himself secure in such a neglect or defiance of God?) or he must be exceedingly profane, entertaining most dishonourable and injurious apprehensions of God. He cannot but imagine God very unkind, not only in neglecting men that want his help, but in making them to suffer for spending upon his account; very unjust, in not repaying what he borrows; very unfaithful, in breaking his word; very deceitful, in gulling us of our things by fair promises of restitutions and requital: or he must apprehend God forgetful of what we do, and himself says; or that he is needy and impotent, not having wherewith to make satisfaction, not being able to make good what he pretends. He must in his conceit debase God even beneath the vilest creatures, thinking a senseless lump of clay more apt in his need to help him, than God can be with all his power and care; supposing his money safer in his own coffers than in God's hands, and that iron bars will guard it more surely than divine protection; esteeming his neighbour's bond for much better security than God's word, and that a mortal man is far more able or more

[l] Acts x. 4.

[m] Matt. vi. 25; Phil. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 7; Psal. iv. 22; Heb. xiii. 5.

* Ὁ γὰρ τοιοῦτος οὐ τῷ Θεῷ πεπίστευκεν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ χρυσίῳ, θεὸν τοῦτο ἡγούμενος, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ πεποιθώς.—Const. Ayost. iv. 4.

[n] Heb. x. 34.

true than the eternal God. He certainly cannot think one word true that God says, being loath to trust him for a penny, for a piece of bread, or for an old garment. All God's promises of recompense, and threatenings of punishment, he takes for idle fictions: heaven and hell are but Utopias in his conceit; the joys of one, offered to the charitable person, are but pleasant fancies; the torments of the other, denounced to the uncharitable, but fearful dreams. All other things are but names; money and lands are the only real things unto him; all the happiness he can conceive or wish is contained in bags and barns; these are the sole points of his faith, and objects of his confidence. *He makes gold his hope, and saith to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence. He rejoices because his wealth is great, and because his hand hath gotten much*,[o] as Job speaketh, disclaiming that practice in himself, and tacitly charging it on the persons we speak of. He doth, in fine, affect a total independency upon God, and cares to have no dealing with him: he would trust to himself, and live on his own estate; so gross infidelity and horrible profaneness of mind lie couched under this sort of vices.

As for the love of God, the liberal man declares it, in that for God's sake he is willing to part with any thing; that he values God's love and favour above all other goods; that he deems himself rich and happy enough in the enjoyment of God. But, *Who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*[p] saith St. John; that is, it is impossible he should love God; 'tis a vain conceit to think he does; 'tis a frivolous thing for him to pretend it. For how possibly can he bear in his heart any affection to God, who will not for his sake, and at his instance, part with a little worthless trash and dirty pelf? who prizes so inconsiderable matters beyond God's favour and friendship? who prefers the keeping of his wealth before the enjoyment of God; and chooses rather certainly to quit his whole interest in God, than to adventure a small parcel of his estate with God? His practice indeed sufficiently discovers, that his hard and stupid heart is uncapable of any love, except of a corrupt, inordinate, and fond love, or dotage toward himself, since so present and sensible objects cannot affect him. *He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?*[q]

And as to the fear and reverence of God, the liberal man expresses it in submission to God's commands, although with his own present seeming diminution and loss; in preferring the discharging of his conscience before the retaining his money; in casting overboard his temporal goods, that he may secure his spiritual and eternal concernments. He can say (his practice attesting to his profession) with David, *I love thy commandments above gold*; and, *The law of thy mouth is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver*: he shows that he is *a man of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness*;[r] which dispositions, as having much affinity and connection, are well joined together by Jethro. But the uncharitable man can have little fear of God before his eyes: since the commands of God have no efficacy on his conscience; since he dreads not the effects of divine power and justice, provoked by his disobedience; since he deems an imaginary danger of want from giving, worse than a certain commission of sin in withholding; and is more afraid of penury here, than of damnation hereafter.

The truth is, the covetous or illiberal man is therefore uncapable of being truly pious, because his heart is possessed with vain devotion toward somewhat beside God, which in effect is his sole divinity: he is justly styled an idolator, for that he directs and employs the chief affections of his mind upon an idol of clay, which he loves with all his heart and all his soul, which he entirely confides in, which he esteems and worships above all things.[s] It is Mammon, which of all the competitors and antagonists of God, invading God's right, and usurping his place, is (as our Lord intimates) the most dangerous, and desperately repugnant: where he becomes predominant, true religion is quite excluded; *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*.[t]

[o] Hab. ii. 9; Job xxxi. 24, 25.
[p] 1 John iii. 17.
[q] 1 John iv. 20.
[r] Psal. cxix. 127; Exod. xviii. 24.
[s] Col. iii. 5; Eph. v. 5. [t] Matt. vi. 24.

Other vicious inclinations combat reason, and often baffle it, but seldom so vanquish it, as that a man doth approve or applaud himself in his miscarriages: but the covetous humour seizeth on our reason itself, and seateth itself therein; inducing it to favour and countenance what is done amiss. The voluptuous man is swayed by the violence of his appetite; but the covetous is seduced by the dictate of his judgment: he therefore scrapes and hoards, and lets go nothing, because he esteems wealth the best thing in the world, and then judges himself most wise, when he is most base. *Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom*, saith Solomon;[u] intimating the judgment such persons are wont to make of their riches: whence, of all dispositions opposite to piety, this is the most pernicious. But further,

6. Let us consider, that nothing is more conformable to God's nature, or renders us more like to him, than beneficence and mercy; and that consequently nothing can be more grateful to him: that nothing is more disagreeable and contrary to the essential disposition of God, than illiberality and unmercifulness; and therefore that nothing can be more distasteful to him. What is any being in the world, but an efflux of his bounty, and an argument of his liberality? Look every where about nature, consider the whole tenor of providence, survey all the works, and scan all the actions of God, you will find them all conspiring in attestation to those sweet characters and elogies which the holy scripture ascribeth to God, representing him to be *merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness;* to be *sorry for evil*, (incident to, or inflicted upon any creature) to *delight in mercy*, to *wait that he may be gracious;* styling him the *God of love, of peace, of hope, of patience, of all grace, and of all consolation, the Father of pities, rich in mercy, and full of bowels;* affirming of him, and by manifold evidences demonstrating, that he is *benign even unto the ungrateful and evil;* that *he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.*[v] Nature, I say, providence, and revelation, do all concur in testifying this, that there is nothing in God so peculiarly admirable, nothing, as it were, so godlike, that is, so highly venerable and amiable, as to do good and show mercy.* We, therefore, by liberal communication to the needy do most approach to the nature of God, and most exactly imitate his practice; acquiring to ourselves thereby somewhat of divinity, and becoming little gods to our neighbour.† *Nothing* (saith St. Chrysostom) *maketh us so near equal to God as beneficence:*‡ and, *Be* (saith St. Gregory Nazianzen) *a god to the unfortunate, imitating the mercy of God; for a man hath nothing of God so much as to do good.*‖ That such hath always been the common apprehension of men, the practice of all times showeth, in that men have been ever apt to place their benefactors among their gods, deferring that love and veneration unto them in degree, which in perfection do appertain to the supreme Benefactor.§ *Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful;*[w] so our Saviour proposeth God's mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulness: implying it also to be a good sign, declaring us the children of God, the genuine offspring of the all-good and all-merciful Father; yea, that it even renders and constitutes us such (we thereby coming most truly to represent, and most nearly to resemble him.) Our Lord further teaches us, saying, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to those that hate you—that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.*[x] And they who thus are God's children must consequently be

[u] Prov. xxiii. 4.

[v] Exod. xxxiv. 6; Joel ii. 13; Mic. vii. 18; Isa. xxx. 18; Rom. xv. 5, 33; Eph. ii. 4; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; i. 3; James v. 11; 1 Pet. v. 10; Luke vi. 35; Psal. cxlv. 9.

* Θεοῦ πολλῶν ὄντων ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν οὕτως ὡς τὸ πάντας εὐεργετεῖν ἰδιώτατον.—Naz. Orat. 26.

† Deus est mortali, juvare mortalem.—*Plin. N. H.* 1. ii.

‡ Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἴσους Θεῷ ποιεῖ, ὡς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν.—Chrys. in Matt. Orat. 35.

‖ Γένου τῷ ἀτυχοῦντι Θεὸς, τὸν ἔλεον τοῦ Θεοῦ μιμησάμενος· οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ὡς τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἄνθρωπος ἔχει Θεοῦ.—Naz. Or. 16.

§ Hic est vetustissimus referendi bene merentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus adscribantur.—*Plin.* ii. 7.

Suscepit vita hominum, consuetadoque communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cœlum fama ac voluntate tollerent.—*Cic. de N. D.* lib. ii.

[w] Luke vi. 35, 36.

[x] Matt. 44. 45.

very dear to him, and most gracious in his sight; he cannot but greatly like and love himself (the best of himself) in them; he cannot but cherish and treat them well, who are the fairest and truest images of himself; no spectacle can be so pleasant to him, as to see us in our practice to act himself, doing good to one another; *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, putting on bowels of mercies and kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave us;* being *followers of God as dear children, and walking in love, even as Christ also loved us.*[y] But on the other side, there is not in nature anything so remotely distant from God, or so extremely opposite to him, as a greedy and griping niggard: hell is scarce so contrary to heaven, as such a man's disposition to the nature of God: for 'tis *goodness* which sits gloriously triumphant at the top of heaven; and *uncharitableness* lieth miserably grovelling under the bottom of hell: heaven descends from the one, as its principal cause; hell is built on the other, as its main foundation: as the one approximates the blessed angels to God, and beatifies them; so the other removeth the cursed fiends to such a distance from God and happiness: not to wish, not to do any good, is that which renders them both so bad and so wretched; and whoever in his conditions is so like to them, and in his practice so agrees with them, cannot but also be very odious to God, and extremely unhappy. God cannot but abhor so base a degeneration from his likeness in those who by nature are his children, and should be further such according to his gracious design; neither can anything more offend his eyes, than seeing them to use one another unkindly. So that, if obtaining the certain favour of the great God, with all the benefits attending it, seem considerable to us; or if we think it advisable to shun his displeasure, with its sad effects: it concerns us to practice these duties. So I conclude that sort of considerations, enforcing these duties, which more immediately regard God.

3*d Head of Discourse.*—Further, before we deny our relief to our poor neighbour, let us with the eyes of our mind look on him, and attentively consider who he is, what he is in himself, and what he is in relation unto us. [*The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it;* Prov. xxix. 7. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor;* Psal. xli. 1.]

1. He whose need craves our bounty, whose misery demands our mercy, what is he? He is not truly so mean and sorry a thing, as the disguise of misfortune, under which he appears, doth represent him. He who looks so deformedly and dismally, who to outward sight is so ill bestead, and so pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory. He within himself containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal soul, and an intelligent mind, by which he nearly resembleth God himself, and is comparable to angels: he invisibly is owner of endowments, rendering him cable of the greatest and best things. What are money and lands? What are silk and fine linen? What are horses and hounds, in comparison to reason, to wisdom, to virtue, to religion, which he hath, or (in despite of all misfortune) he may have if he please? He whom you behold so dejectedly sneaking, in so despicable a garb, so destitute of all convenience and comfort (lying in the dust, naked, or clad with rags, meagre with hunger or pain), he comes of a most high and heavenly extraction: he was born a prince, the son of the greatest King eternal; he can truly call the sovereign Lord of all the world his father, having derived his soul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himself. (In this, *The rich and poor*, as the Wise Man saith, *do meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.*[z]) That same forlorn wretch, whom we are so apt to despise and trample upon, was framed and constituted lord of the visible world; had all the goodly brightnesses of heaven, and all the costly furnitures of earth, created to serve him.[a] (*Thou madest him*, saith the Psalmist of man, *to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*[b]) Yea, he was made an

[y] Col. iii. 12, 13; Eph. v. 1, 2.

[z] Prov. xxii. 2.

[a] Gen. i. 28.

[b] Psal. viii. 6.

inhabitant of paradise, and possessor of felicities superlative; had immortal life and endless joy in his hand, did enjoy the entire favour and friendship of the Most High. Such in worth of nature and nobleness of birth he is, as a man; and highly more considerable he is, as a Christian. For, as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath so regarded and prized him, as for his sake to descend from heaven, to clothe himself with flesh, to assume the form of a servant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greatest inconveniences, infirmities, wants, and disgraces, the most grievous troubles and most sharp pains incident to mortal nature. God hath adopted him to be his child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him brother; he is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a free denizen of the heavenly city, an heir of salvation, and candidate of eternal glory. The greatest and richest personage is not capable of better privileges than God hath granted him, or of higher preferments than God hath designed him to. He equally with the mightiest prince is the object of God's especial providence and grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; who, as good Elihu saith, *accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands.*[c] In fine, this poor creature whom thou seest is a man, and a Christian, thine equal, whoever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition: I say not, in the uncertain and unstable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly state, which is very inconsiderable; but in gifts vastly more precious, in title to an estate infinitely more rich and excellent.* Yea, if thou art vain and proud, be sober and humble; he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in real wealth surpassing thee: for, *Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.*[d]

2. That distinction which thou standest upon, and which seemeth so vast between thy poor neighbour and thee, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not anywise natural, or according to primitive design: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, so were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all constituted in a most prosperous and plentiful estate; all things at first were promiscuously exposed to the use and enjoyment of all, every one from the common stock assuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private interest in things (together with sicknesses and pains, together with all other infelicities and inconveniences) were the by-blows of our fall:* sin introduced these degrees and distances; it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and inclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendered so much strife among men, and created so much mischief in the world: these preternatural distinctions were, I say, brooded by our fault, and are in great part fostered and maintained thereby; for were we generally so good, so just, so chartable as we should be, they could hardly subsist, especially in that measure they do.† God indeed (for promoting some good ends, and for prevention of some mischiefs, apt to spring from our ill-nature

* ——ἐννόησον, ὅτι ὁμοίως σοι ἐλεύθερός ἐστι, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς σοι κοινωνεῖ εὐγενείας, καὶ πάντα σοι κοινὰ κέκτηται.Chrys. in Heb. Orat. 2.

Οἱ τοίνυν ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς τοσαύτην ἔχοντες ἰσοτιμίαν, πόθεν μέγα φρονεῖτε; ὅτι ὁ δεῖνα πλούσιος, καὶ ὁ δεῖνα ἰσχυρός;—Chrys. in Eph. iv. 4, in Joh. Orat. 15.

Ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος χάρις ὁμοτίμους ποιεῖ τοὺς ὁμορρονας.—Naz. Or. 23.

[c] Job xxxiv. 19.

* Πενία καὶ πλοῦτος, ἐλευθερία τε, ἣν φαμὲν, καὶ δουλεία, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὀνομάτων, ὕστερον ἐπεισῆλθον τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ ἀρρωστήματα τῇ κακίᾳ συνεισπέσοντα, κἀκείνης ὄντα ἐπινοήματα.—Greg. Naz. Ort. 6.

† Τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν, καὶ τὸ σὸν, τοῦτο τὸ ψυχρὸν ῥῆμα, καὶ μυρίους πολέμους εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην εἰσαγαγὸν, &c.—Chrys. tom. v. λογ. νϑ'. et in Act. ii. 47.

Natura omnia omnibus in commune profudit; sic enim Deus generari jussit omnia, ut pastus omnibus communis esset, et terra foret omnium quædam communis possessio. Natura igitur jus cammune generavit, usurpatio jus fecit privatum.—*Amb. Offic.* i. 28.

Καὶ γὰρ εἰ μετὰ ἀκριβείας τοῦτο ἐφυλάττετο, οὐ δοῦλος, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος ἦν, οὐκ ἄρχων, οὐκ ἀρχόμενος, οὐ πλούσιος, οὐ πένης, οὐ μικρὸς, οὐ μέλας. οὐ διάβολος ἂν ἐγνώσθη ποτέ —Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. 32.

Ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἐν θεάτρῳ θεὰν καταλαβὼν, εἶτα εἰσείργοι τοὺς ἐπεισιόντας ἴδιον ἑαυτοῦ κρίνων τὸ κοινὸν πᾶσι κατὰ τὴν χρῆσιν προκείμενον· τοιοῦτοί εἰσι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι· τὰ καὶ κοινὰ προκατάσχοντες ἰδιοποιοῦνται διὰ τὴν πρόληψιν.—Basil. M.

[d] Eccles. x. 24; Prov. xxviii. 6.

in this our lapsed state; particularly to prevent the strife and disorder which scrambling would cause among men, presuming on equal right and parity of force) doth suffer them in some manner to continue, and enjoins us a contented submission to them: but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that all the world is so cantonized among some few, that the rest have no share therein. No; every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision made for his tolerable subsistence. God hath brought no man hither to be necessarily starved, or pinched with extreme want; but hath assigned to every one a child's portion, in some fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right, or by humble request, which according to conscience ought to have effect.* No man, therefore, is allowed to detain, or to destroy superfluously, what another man apparently wants; but is obliged to impart to him; so that rich men are indeed but the treasurers, the stewards, the caterers of God for the rest of men, having a strict charge to *dispense unto every one his meat in due season*,[e] and no just privilege to withhold it from any: the honour of distribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reserved to the poor, as a provision for their necessity. Thus hath God wisely projected, that all his children should both effectually and quietly be provided for, and that none of them should be oppressed with penury; so that, as St. Paul hath it, *one man's abundance shall supply another man's want, that there may be an equality*:[f] for since no man can enjoy more than he needs, and every man should have so much as he needs, there can be really no great inequality among men; the distinction will scarce remain otherwhere than in fancy. What the philosopher said of himself, *What I have is so mine, that it is every man's*,† is according to the practice of each man, who is truly and in due measure charitable; whereby that seemingly enormous* discrimination among men is well moderated, and the equity of divine Providence is vindicated. But he that ravenously grasps for more than he can well use, and gripes it fast into his clutches, so that the needy in their distresses cannot come by it, doth pervert that equity which God hath established in things, defeats his good intention (so far as he can), and brings a scandal on his providence: and so doing is highly both injurious and impious.

3. It was also (which we should consider) even one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by God's providence, that as some men's industry and patience might be exercised by their poverty, so other men by their wealth should have ability of practising justice and charity; that so both rich and poor might thence become capable of recompenses, suitable to the worth of such virtuous performances. *Why art thou rich*, saith St. Basil, *and he poor? Surely for this: that thou mayest attain the reward of benignity, and faithful dispensation; and that he may be honoured with the great prize of patience.*† God, in making thee rich, would have thee to be a double benefactor, not only to thy poor neighbour, but also to thyself, whilst thou bestowest relief on him, purchasing a reward to thyself. God also by this order of things designs, that a charitable intercourse should be maintained among men, mutually pleasant and beneficial; the rich kindly obliging the poor, and the poor gratefully serving the rich. Wherefore, by neglecting these duties, we unadvisedly cross the good purpose of God toward us, depriving ourselves of the chief advantages our wealth may afford.

4. We should also do well to consider, that a poor man, even as such, is not to be disregarded, and that poverty itself is

* Incassum se innocentes putant, qui commune Dei munus sibi privatum vindicant.—*Greg. M.*

† Ego mea sic habeo, ut omnium sint.—*Demetrius apud Sen. de Ben.* vii. 10.

[e] Matt. xxiv. 45; Luke xii. 42.

[f] 2 Cor. viii. 14.

* Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν, οὐδὲν περισσότερον κέκτηται τοῦ πλησίον.—Basil. M.

† Διά τι σὺ μὲν πλουτεῖς, ἐκεῖνος δὲ πένεται; ἢ πάντως ἵνα σὺ χρηστότητος καὶ πιστῆς οἰκονομίας μισθὸν ἀποδέξῃ, ἐκεῖνος τοῖς μεγάλοις ἄθλοις τῆς ὑπομονῆς τιμηθῇ.—Basil. M.

Πλοῦτον καὶ πενίαν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διένειμεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός τε καὶ πρύτανις οὐκ ἀδίκῳ ψήφῳ χρησάμενος, ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν ὠφελείας τοῖς πλουτίοις παρέχων τῶν πενήτων τὴν ἔνδειαν.—Theod. Epist. 23.

no such contemptible thing as we may be prone to imagine. There are considerations, which may qualify poverty even to dispute the place with wealth, and to claim precedence to it. If the world vulgarly doth account and call the rich man happy, a better Author hath pronounced the poor man such: *Blessed are the poor*,[g] doth march in the van of the beatitudes; and a reason goeth along therewith, which asserteth its right to the place, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* for that they are not only in an equal capacity as men, but in a nearer disposition as poor, to the acquisition of that blissful state; for that poverty (the mistress of sobriety and honest industry, the mother of humility and patience, the nurse of all virtue) renders men more willing to go, and more expedite in the way toward heaven: by it also we conform to the Son of God himself, the heir of eternal majesty, the Saviour of the world, *who for our sake became poor* (δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, for our sake became a beggar), *that we through his poverty* (or beggary) *might become rich:*[h] he willingly chose, he especially dignified and sanctified that depth of poverty, which we so proudly slight and loathe. The greatest princes and potentates in the world, the most wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor beggar had been irrecoverably miserable; to poverty it is, that every one of us doth owe all the possibility there is, all the hopes we can have, of our salvation:* and shall we then ingratefully requite with it scorn, or with pitiless neglect? shall we presume, in the person of any poor man, to abhor or contemn the very poor, but most holy and most happy JESUS, our Lord and redeemer? No: if we will do poverty right, we must rather for his dear sake and memory defer an especial respect and veneration thereto.

5. Thus a due reflection on the poor man himself, his nature and state, will induce us to succour. But let us also consider him as related unto ourselves: every such person is our near kinsman, is our brother, is by indissoluble bands of cognation in blood, and agreement in nature, knit and united to us. We are all but several streams issuing from one scource, several twigs sprouting from one stock; *one blood*,[i] derived through several channels; one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction multiplied or dilated unto several times and places. We are all fashioned according to the same original idea, resembling God, our common Father; we are all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; we all conspire in the same essential ingredients of our constitution, and in the more notable adjuncts thereof; it is only some inconsiderable accidents (such as age, place, figure, stature, colour, garb) which diversify and distinguish us; in which, according to successions of time and chance, we commonly no less differ from ourselves than we do at present from them: so that in effect and reasonable esteem, every man is not only our brother, but (as Aristotle saith of a friend) ἄλλος αὐτὸς, *another one's self;* is not only our most lively image, but in a manner our very substance, another ourself under a small variation of present circumstances: the most of distinction between us and our poor neighbour consists in exterior show, in moveable attire, in casual appendages to the nature of man; so that really when we use him well, we are kind to ourselves; when we yield him courteous regard, we bear respect to our own nature; when we feed and comfort him, we do sustain and cherish a member of our own body.* But when we are cruel or harsh to him, we abuse ourselves; when we scorn him, we lay disparagement and disgrace on mankind itself; when we withhold succour or sustenance from him, we do, as the prophet speaketh, *hide ourselves from our own flesh;*[j] we starve a part of our own body, and wither a branch of our stock; immoderate selfishness so blindeth us, that we oversee and forget ourselves: it is in this, as it is in other good senses, true, what the Wise Man saith,

* Deidignatur aliquis paupertatem, cujus tam claræ imagines sunt?—*Sen. Consol. ad Helv.* 12.

[g] Luke vi. 20. [h] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

* Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debeatur.—*Aug. Ep.* 121.

Οἰκεῖον πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον.—Arist.

Ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις πάθεσι θεραπευτέον τὸ συγγενὲς, καὶ ὁμόδουλον.—Greg. Naz.

Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus.—*Cic. de Leg.* 1.

[i] Acts xvii. 26. [j] Isa. lviii. 7.

The merciful man doeth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.[k]

6. Further, as the poor man is so nearly allied to us by society of common nature, so is he more strictly joined to us by the bands of spiritual consanguinity. All Christians (high and low, rich and poor) are children of the same heavenly Father, spring from the same incorruptible seed, are regenerated to the same lively hope, are coheirs of the same heavenly inheritance; are all members of one body (*members*, saith St. Paul, *one of another*), and animated by one holy Spirit: which relation, as it is the most noble and most close that can be, so it should breed the greatest endearments, and should express itself in correspondent effects;[l] it should render us full of affection and sympathy one toward another; it should make us to tender the needs, and feel the sufferings of any Christian as our own; it should dispose us freely to communicate whatever we have, how precious soever, to any of our brethren; this holy friendship should establish a charitable equality and community among us, both in point of honour and of estate: for since all things considerable are common unto us, since we are all purchased and purified by the same precious blood, since we all partake of the same precious faith, of the same high calling, of the same honourable privileges, of the same glorious promises and hopes; since we all have the same Lord and Saviour; why should these secular trifles be so private and particular among us? Why should not so huge a parity in those only valuable things not wholly (I say, not in worldly state or outward appearance, such as the preservation of order in secular affairs requireth, but) in our opinion and affection extinguish that slight distinction of *rich* and *poor*,[m] in concernments temporal? How can we slight so noble, so great a personage as a Christian, for wanting a little dross? How can we deem ourselves much his superior, upon so petty an advantage, for having that, which is not worth speaking or thinking of, in comparison to what he enjoyeth? Our Lord himself is not ashamed to call the least among us his brother and his friend: and shall we then disdain to yield to such an one the regard and treatment suitable to such a quality?[n] Shall we not honour any brother of our Lord? Shall we not be civil and kind to any friend of his? If we do not, how can we pretend to bear any true respect or affection unto himself? It is his express precept, that the greatest among us should, in imitation of his most humble and charitable self, be ready to serve the meanest;[o] and that we should *in honour prefer one another*, and *in lowliness of mind esteem others better than ourselves*,[p] are apostolical rules, extending indifferently to rich and poor, which are plainly violated by disregarding the poor. Yea, this relation should, according to St. John's doctrine, dispose us not only freely to impart these temporal goods, but even, if occasion be, willingly to expose our very lives for our brethren: *Hereby* (saith he) *we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.*[q] How greatly, then, are they deficient from their duty, how little in truth are they Christians, who are unwilling to part with the very superfluities and excrements of their fortune for the relief of a poor Christian! Thus considering our brother, may breed in us charitable dispositions toward him, and induce us to the practice of these duties.

4th Head of Discourse.—Moreover, if we reflect upon ourselves, and consider either our nature, or our state here, we cannot but observe many strong engagements to the same practice.

1. The very constitution, frame, and temper of our nature directeth and inclineth us thereto; whence, by observing those duties, we observe our own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the best perfection it is capable of; by neglecting them, we thwart, we impair, we debase the same—*hæc nostri pars optima sensus*;[r] the best of our natural inclinations

[k] Prov. xi. 17.

[l] Rom. xii. 5, Are all one.—Gal. iii. 28. Πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.—Chrys. in John, Or. 15.—Φίλων γὰρ οὐδὲν ἴδιον, οὕτινες φίλοι ὀρθῶς πεφύκασ', ἀλλὰ κοινὰ χρήματα.—Eurip. Androm.

[m] Col. iii. 11.

[n] Heb. ii. 11; Matt. xxv. 40; John xv. 14.

[o] Matt. xx. 26. [p] Rom. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 3.

[q] 1 John iii. 16.

[r] Juven. Sat. xv. 133.

(those sacred relics of God's image originally stamped on our minds) do sensibly prompt, and vehemently urge us to mercy and pity: the very same bowels, which in our own want do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide for its relief, do also grievously resent the distresses of another, admonishing us thereby, and provoking us to yield him succour.* Such is the natural sympathy between men (discernible in all, but appearing most vigorous in the best natures), that we cannot see, cannot hear of, yea, can hardly imagine the calamities of other men, without being somewhat disturbed and afflicted ourselves. As also nature, to the acts requisite toward preservation of our life, hath annexed a sensible pleasure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them; so hath she made the communication of benefits to others to be accompanied with a very delicious relish upon the mind of him that practises it; nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and savoury delight than beneficence. A man may be virtuously, voluptuously, and a laudable epicure, by doing much good; for to receive good, even in the judgment of Epicurus himself (the great patron of pleasure), is nowise so pleasant as to do it:† God and nature, therefore, within us do solicit the poor man's case: even our own case and satisfaction demand from us compassion and kindness towards him; by exercising them, we hearken to nature's wise disciplines, and comply with her kindly instincts: we cherish good humour, and sweeten our complexion; so ennobling our minds, we become not only more like to God, but more perfectly men: by the contrary practice, we rebel against the laws, and pervert the due course of our nature; we do weaken, corrupt, and stifle that which is best in us; we harden and stupify our souls; so monstrously degenerating from the perfection of our kind, and becoming rather like savage beasts than sociable men; yea, somewhat worse perhaps than many beasts; for commonly brutes will combine to the succour of one another, they will defend and help those of the same kind.

2. And if the sensitive part within us doth suggest so much, the rational dictates more unto us: that heavenly faculty, having capacities so wide, and so mighty energies, was surely not created to serve mean or narrow designs; it was not given us to scrape eternally in earth, or to amass heaps of clay for private enjoyment; for the service of one pusine creature, for the sustenance or satisfaction of a single carcass: it is much below an intelligent person to weary himself with servile toils, and distract his mind with ignoble cares, for concernments so low and scanty: but to regard and pursue the common good of men; to dispense, advise, and aid, where need requires; to diffuse its virtue all about in beneficial effects: these are operations worthy of reason, these are employments congruous to the native excellency of that divine power implanted in us; such performances declare indeed what a man is, whence he sprang, and whither he tends.

3. Further, examining ourselves, we may also observe, that we are in reality, what our poor neighbour appears to be, in many respects no less indigent and impotent than he: we no less, yea far more, for our subsistence depend upon the arbitrary bounty of another, than he seemeth to rely upon ours. We as defectible creatures do continually want support; we as grievous sinners do always need mercy; every moment we are contracting huge debts, far beyond our ability to discharge; debts of gratitude for benefits received, debts of guilt for offences committed: we therefore perpetually stand obliged to be craving for mercy and relief at the gates of heaven. We all, from prince to peasant, live merely upon alms, and are most really in condition beggars: *to pray always*, is a duty incumbent on us from the condition of our nature, as well as by the command of God. Such a likeness in state should therefore dispose us to succour our fellows, and, *διανείζειν Θεῷ ἔλεον ἐλέου χρήζοντιας, to lend mercy to God, who need mercy from him*,[a] as the Father speaketh. We should, as the apostle

* ——— mutuus ut nos affectus petere auxillium, et praestare juberet.—*Juven.* xv. 149. Φιλόπτωχον καὶ συμπαθὲς τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος.—Arch. ad Mon. 852.

† Ἐπίκουρος τοῦ εὖ πάσχειν τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναί φησι.—Plut. de Philos. Conv. cum Princ.

[a] Greg. Naz.

advises and argues, *remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body;*[t] as being companions in necessity, or subject to the like distress. If we daily receive mercy and relief, yet, unmindful of our obligation to God, refuse them to others, shall we not deserve to hear that dreadful exprobration, *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?*[u]

4. The great incertainty and instability of our condition doth also require our consideration.* We that now flourish in a fair and full estate, may soon be in the case of that poor creature who now sues for our relief; we, that this day enjoy the wealth of Job, may the morrow need his patience: there are Sabeans, which may come, and drive away our cattle; there are tempests which may arise, and smite down our houses; there is a fire of God, which may fall from heaven, and consume our substance;—a messenger of all these mischiefs may, for all we know, be presently at our doors; it happened so to a better man than we, as unexpectedly, and with as small ground to fear it, as it can arrive to us: all our wealth is surrounded with dangers, and exposed to casualties innumerable; violence may snatch it from us, treachery may cheat us of it; mischance may seize thereon, a secret moth may devour it; the wisdom of Providence for our trial, or its justice for our punishment, may bereave us thereof; its own light and fluid nature (if no other accountable causes were apparant) might easliy serve to waft it from us; for *Riches* (saith the Wise Man) *make themselves wings* (they, it seems, do need no help for that) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven;*[v] that is, of their own accord they do swiftly convey themselves away, out of our sight, and beyond our reach; they are but wind: *What profit* (says the Preacher) *hath he that laboureth for the wind?*[w] For wind; that is, for a thing which can nowise be fixed or settled in one corner; which, therefore, it is vanity to conceive that we can surely appropriate, or long retain. How then can we think to stand firm upon a place so slippery? how can we build any confidence on a bottom so loose and brittle? how can we suffer our minds to be swelled up like bubbles with vain conceit, by the breath of such things, more fleeting and vertiginous than any air? against the precepts of the wisest and best men: *If riches increase*, saith the Psalmist, *set not your heart on them: Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?*[x] saith the Wise Man (that is, wilt thou regard that which so transitory and evanid, that it hardly may be deemed real; which we can scarce look on, before it is gone?) And, *Charge them* (saith St. Paul) *that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches* (ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, in the obscurity, or in evidence of riches; things, which we can never plainly discern how long we shall keep them, how much we can enjoy them:) what should make us unwilling, with certain advantages to ourselves, freely to let that go, which presently without our leave may forsake us? How can we reasonably judge our case much different from that of the poorest body, whenas in a trice we may perhaps change places and persons; when, the scene turning, he may be advanced unto our wealth, we may be depressed into his want?* Since every age yieldeth instances of some Crœsus, some Polycrates, some Pompey, some Job, some Nebuchodonosor, who within a small compass of time doth appear to all men the object both of admiration and pity, is to the less wise the mark both of envy and scorn;† seeing every day presenteth unexpected vicissitudes, the sea of human affairs continually ebbing and flowing, now rolling on this, now on the other shore, its restless waves of profit and credit; since especially there is a God, who arbitrarily disposeth things, and with a turn of his hand changeth the state of men; who, as

* Ὅμως δ' ἔνεστι τοῖσιν εὖ σκοπουμένοις ταρβεῖν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα μὴ σφαλῇ ποτέ.—Soph. in Trachin.

* Καὶ γὰρ ἰσχάτης ἀνοίας ἂν εἴη ὧν καὶ ἄκοντες ἐξίστασθαι μέλλομεν ἑτέροις, τούτων μὴ μεταδοῦναι ἑκόντας τοῖς δεομένοις.—Chrys. tom. v. Orat. 55.

† Sejanus—quo die illum Senatus deduxerat, populus in frusta divisit.—*Sen. de Tranq.* ii.

[t] Heb. xiii. 3.
[u] Matt. xviii. 32, 33.
[v] Prov. xxiii. 5.
[w] Eccles. v. 16.
[x] Psal. lxii. 10; Prov. xxiii. 5.

the Scripture saith, *maketh rich and poor, bringeth low and lifteth up; poureth contempt upon princes; raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory:*[y] seeing, I say, apparently such is the condition of things here, that we may soon need his pity and help, who now requesteth ours, why should we not be very ready to afford them to him? why should we not gladly embrace our opportunity, and use our turn well; becoming aforehand with others, and preventing their reciprocal contempt or neglect of us hereafter? *Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also unto eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth:*[z] that is, considering the inconstancy and uncertainty of affairs here, and what adversity may befall thee, be liberal upon all occasions and thou shalt (even a good while after) find returns of thy liberality upon thee: so the Wise Man advises, and so wisdom certainly dictates that we should do.

5. And equity doth exact no less: for were any of us in the needy man's plight (as easily we may be reduced thereto), we should believe our case deserved commiseration; we should importunately demand relief; we should be grievously displeased at a repulse; we should apprehend ourselves very hardly dealt with, and sadly we should complain of inhumanity and cruelty, if succour were refused to us. In all equity, therefore, we should be apt to minister the same to others; for nothing can be more unreasonable or unjust, than to require or expect that from another, which in a like case we are unwilling to render unto him:* it is a plain deviation from that fundamental rule, which is the base of all justice, and virtually the sum, as our Saviour telleth us, of whatever is prescribed us: *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*[a] I add, that upon these considerations, by unmerciful dealing we put ourselves into a very bad and ticklish condition, wholly depending upon the constancy of that which is most inconstant; so that if our fortune do fail, we can neither reasonably hope for, nor justly pretend to, any relief or comfort from others: *He that doeth good turns is mindful of that which may come hereafter; and when he falleth, he shall find a stay.*[b]

6. We should also remember concerning ourselves, that we are mortal and frail. Were we immortal, or could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands; yea, could we foresee some definite space of time, considerably long, in which we might assuredly enjoy our stores, it might seem somewhat excusable to scrape hard, and to hold fast; to do so might look like rational providence: but since *riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to all generations,*[c] as the Wise Man speaketh; since they must infallibly be soon left, and there is no certainty of keeping them for any time, it is very unaccountable why we should so greedily seek them, and hug them so fondly. *The rich man* (saith St. James) *as the flower of the grass shall pass away;*[d] it is his special doom *to fade away* suddenly; it is obvious why in may respects he is somewhat more than others obnoxious to the fatal stroke, and upon special accounts of justice he may be further more exposed thereto: considering the case of the rich fool in the Gospel, we may easily discern them; we should reckon, that it may happen to us as it did there to him; that after we have reared great barns, and *stored up much goods for many years*, our *soul this very night* may be *required of us:*[e] however, if it be uncertain when, it is most certain, that after a very short time our thread will be spun out; then shall we be rifled, and quite stript of all; becoming stark-naked, as when we came into the world:[f] we shall not carry with us one grain of our glistering metals, or one rag of our gaudy stuff; our stately houses, our fine gardens, and our spacious walks, must all

* Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit.—*Laber. Mim.*

[y] 1 Sam. ii. 7; Job xii. 21; Psal. cvii. 41; cxiii. 7, 8.
[z] Eccles. xi. 1, 2.
[a] Matt. vii. 12.
[b] Eccles. iii. 31.
[c] Prov. xxvii. 24.
[d] James i. 10, 11.
[e] Luke xii. 20.
[f] 1 Tim. vi. 7; Eccles. v. 15; Job i. 21.

be exchanged for a close hole under ground; we must for ever bid farewell to our pomps and magnificences, to our feasts and jollities, to our sports and pastimes:[g] not one of all our numerous and splendid retinue, no companion of our pleasure, no admirer of our fortune, no flatterer of our vices, can wait upon us; desolate and unattended we must go down to the chambers of darkness: then shall we find that to die rich, as men are wont improperly to speak, is really to die most poor; that to have carefully kept our money, is to have lost it utterly; that by leaving much, we do indeed leave worse than nothing: to have been wealthy, if we have been illiberal and unmerciful, will be no advantage or satisfaction to us after we are gone hence; yea, it will be the cause of huge damage and bitter regret unto us. All our treasures will not procure us any favour, or purchase one advocate for us, in that impartial world; yea, it shall be they which will there prosecute us with clamorous accusations, will bear sore testimony against us (*The rust of them*, saith St. James, *shall be a witness against us*, signifying our unjust or uncharitable detention of them), will obtain a most heavy sentence upon us;[h] they will render our audit more difficult, and inflame our reckoning; they will aggravate the guilt of our sins with imputations of unfaithfulness and ingratitude; so with their load they will press us deeper into perdition: to omit, that having so ill managed them, we shall leave them behind us as marks of obloquy, and monuments of infamy upon our memories;[i] for ordinarily of such a rich person it is true that Job says of him, *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place*;[j] like one who departs from off this stage, after having very ill acted his part. Is it not, therefore, infinitely better to prevent this being necessarily and unprofitably deprived of our goods, by seasonably disposing them so as may conduce to our benefit, and our comfort, and our honour;* being very indifferent and unconcerned in our affection toward them; modest and humble in our conceits about them; moderate and sober in our enjoyments of them; contented upon any reasonable occasion to lose or leave them; and especially most ready to dispense them in that best way, which God hath prescribed, according to the exigencies of humanity and charity? By thus ordering our riches, we shall render them benefits and blessings to us;[k] we shall by them procure sure friendship and favour, great worship and respect in the other world; having so lived (in the exercise of bounty and mercy), we shall truly die rich, and in effect carry all our goods along with us, or rather we have thereby sent them before us; having, like wise merchants, transmitted and drawn them by a most safe conveyance into our country and home; where infallibly we shall find them, and with everlasting content enjoy them. So considering ourselves, and our state, will dispose us to the practice of these duties.

5th Head of Discourse.—Furthermore, if we contemplate our wealth itself, we may therein descry great motives to bounty.

1. Thus to employ our riches is really the best use they are capable of; not only the most innocent, most worthy, most plausible, but the most safe, most pleasant, most advantageous, and consequently in all respects most prudent way of disposing them. To keep them close without using or enjoying them at all, is a most sottish extravagance, or a strange kind of madness; a man thence affecting to be rich quite impoverisheth himself, dispossesseth himself of all, and alienated from himself his estate:† his gold is no more his than when it was in the Indies, or lay hid in the mines; his corn is no more his than if it stood grow-

[g] Isa. xiv. 11.

[h] James v. 3; Luke xvi. 25; vi. 24; xii. 21; Matt. xxv. 30; James v. 5.

[i] 1 Tim. vi. 9. [j] Job xxvii. 19, 23.

* Τῆς γὰρ ἰσχάτης ἀνοίας ἐστὶν ἀφεῖναί τι τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀναπομεῖναι ἐνταῦθα, ἡμῶν μικρὸν ὕστερον μελλόντων ἐντεῦθεν ἀποδημεῖν· καὶ γὰρ ὅπερ ἀπολειφθῇ ζημία γίνεται· πάντα τοίνυν ἐκεῖ προπεμπίσθω, ἵνθα καὶ ἡμεῖς διατρίβειν μέλλομεν λοιπόν.—Chrys. tom. v. Orat. 54.

† Σκορπιζόμενος ὁ πλοῦτος πέφυκε παραμένειν, συνεχόμενος ἀλλοτριοῦται.—Basil. M.

Tam deest avaro quod habet, quam quod non habet.

[k] Luke xvi. 9.

ing in Arabia or China; he is no more owner of his lands than he is master of Jerusalem, or Grand Cairo: for what difference is there, whether distance of place, or baseness of mind, sever things from him? whether his own heart, or another man's hand, detain them from his use? whether he hath them not at all, or hath them to no purpose? whether one is a beggar out of necessity or by choice? is pressed to want, or a volunteer thereto? Such an one may fancy himself rich, and others as wise as himself may repute him so: but so distracted persons to themselves, and to one another, do seem great princes, and style themselves such; with as much reason almost he might pretend to be wise, or to be good. Riches are *χρήματα*, things whose nature consists in usefulness;* abstract that, they become nothing, things of no consideration or value; he that hath them is no more concerned in them than he that hath them not: it is the art and skill to use affluence of things wisely and nobly, which makes it wealth, and constitutes him rich that hath it; otherwise the chests may be crammed, and the barns stuffed full, while the man is miserably poor and beggarly:† it is in this sense true which the Wise Man says, *There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing.*[l] But the very having riches (will such a man say) is matter of reputation; men do esteem and honour him that hath them. True, if he knows how, and hath the mind to use them well: otherwise all the credit they yield consists in making their master ridiculous to wise men, and infamous among all men. But, putting case that any should be so foolish as to respect us merely for seeming rich, why should we accommodate our practice to their vain opinion, or be base ourselves, because others are not wise? But however (may he say again,) it is a pleasant thing to see them; a heap of gold is the most lovely spectacle that one can behold; it does a man's heart good to view an abundance of good things about him. For this plea, indeed, he hath a good author: this, it should seem, was all the benefit the Wise Man observed in them, accruing to such persons: *What good* (saith he) *is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*[m] But if this be all they are good for, it is, one would think, a very slim benefit they afford, little able to balance the pain and care requisite to the acquist and custody of them; a benefit indeed not proper to the possessor; for any one may look on them as well as he, or on the like; any one at pleasure may enjoy better sights: all the riches and ornaments of nature, the glorious splendors of heaven, and the sweet beauties of the field, are exposed to common view; the choicest magnificences and gallantries of the world do studiously present themselves to every man's eye; these in part every man truly may appropriate to himself; and by imagination any man can as well take all that he sees for his own, as the tenacious miser doth fancy his dear pelf to be his.

But mine heir (perhaps he will further say) will thank me, will praise me, will bless me for my great care and providence. If he doth, what is that to thee? Nothing of that will concern thee, or can reach thee; thou shalt not hear what he says, or feel any good from what he does: and most probably thou art mistaken in thy opinion concerning him; as thou *knowest not who* he shall be *that shall gather all thou leapest up*, or *shall rule over all thy labour* (*whether he shall be a wise man or a fool*,[n] a kinsman or a stranger, a friend or a foe), so thou canst as little guess what he will think or say: if he hath wit, he may sweetly laugh at thee for thy fond wisdom; if he hath none, his commendations will little adorn thy memory; he will to thy disgrace spend what thou leavest, as vainly as thou didst get or keep it. But (this to be sure he will in the end say for himself) money is a good reserve against necessary occasions, or bad times that may come; against the time of old age, of sickness, of adversity; it is the surest friend a man can have in such cases, which, when all fails, will be ready to help him: *The rich man's wealth is his*

* Καὶ γὰρ χρήματα διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται οὐχ ἵνα κατορύξωμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα εἰς δέον αὐτοῖς χρησώμεθα.—Chrys. in Matt. Orat. 49.

† Desunt inopi multa, avaro omnia.—*Sen. Epist.* 108.

[l] Prov. xiii. 7.

[m] Eccles. v. 11.

[n] Psal. xxxix. 6; Eccles. ii. 19.

strong city:[o] the wise man, he thinks, never spake more wisely; he therefore will not dismantle this fortress, but will keep it well stored, letting therefore his wealth lie dead and useless by him. But (to let pass now the profane infidelity of this plea, excluding all hope in God, and substituting our providence in the room of his) what a folly is it thus to anticipate evil, and to create to ourselves a present adversity from a suspicion of one future; to pinch ourselves now, lest we should suffer hereafter; to pine to-day, because we can imagine it possible that we may starve to-morrow; to forego certain occasions of enjoying our goods, for that perchance the like occasions may happen one day, we know not when; not to use things now, when reason bids us, because they may be useful at another time! Not considering also, that many intervenient accidents, more probably than a moderate and handsome use of our wealth, may crop the excrescences thereof.

2. But setting aside these absurd excuses of penuriousness, we may consider, that, secluding the good use of them, in beneficence, riches are very impertinent, very cumbersome, very dangerous, very mischievous things; either superfluous toys, or troublesome clogs, or treacherous snares, or rather all these in combination, productive of trouble, sorrow, and sin. A small pittance will and must suffice, to all reasonable purposes, to satisfy our necessities, to procure conveniences, to yield innocent delight and ease: our nature doth not require, nor can bear much: (*Take heed and beware of covetousness*, saith our Lord; *for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*; that is, a man may live well without it:) all the rest, setting beneficence apart, can only serve vanity or vice, will make us really fools and slaves.* (*They that will be rich*, saith the apostle, *fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*[p]) They puff up our minds with vain and false conceits; making us, as if we were in a dream or phrenzy, to take ourselves for other persons, more great, more wise, more good, more happy than we are; for constantly, the Wise Man observed, *The rich man is wise in his own conceit: Great men are not always wise.*[q] And Agar thus intimates in his prayer, *Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches.*[r] They render us insensible and forgetful of God, of ourselves, of piety and virtue, of all that is good and worthy of us; (*Lest I be full*, said that good man again, assigning a reason why he deprecated being rich, *and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?*[s]) they swallow up our thoughts, our affections, our endeavours, our time and leisure, possessing our hearts with a doting love unto them (excluding other good affections), distracting our minds with anxious cares about them (choking other good thoughts), encumbering all our life with business about them (inconsistent with due attention to our other more weighty and necessary concernments), filling our heads with suspicions and fears, piercing our hearts with troubles and sorrows;[t] they immerse our souls in all the follies of pride, in all the filths of luxury, in all the mischiefs emergent from sloth and stupidity; they are *the root of all evils*[u] unto us, and the greatest obstructions of our true happiness, rendering salvation almost impossible, and heaven in a manner inaccessible to us; so that to be rich (if severed from a sober mind, and a free heart) is a great disease, and the source of many grievous distempers both of body and mind; from which we cannot well otherwise secure or rescue ourselves, than by liberally spending them in works of bounty and mercy:* so shall we ease ourselves of the burdens, so shall we elude the temptations, so shall we abandon the vices, and so shall we escape all the sad mischiefs incident to them: thus to use wealth shall turn it

* Corporis exigua desideria sunt; frigus submovere vult, alimentis famem ac sitim extinguere; quicquid extra concupiscitur, vitiis, non usibus, laboratur.—*Sen. Cons. ad Helv.* 9.

[o] Prov. x. 15.

[p] Luke xii. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 8, 9.

* Ἀποφόρτισαί τι τοῦ ὄψους, ἵνα πέλῃς κουφότερος. —Naz. Or. 27.

[q] Prov. xxviii. 11; Job xxxii. 9.

[r] Prov. xxx. 8.

[s] Prov. xxx. 9.

[t] Matt. vi. 24; Eccles. xxxi. 1; Matt. xiii. 22; Luke x. 41; 2 Tim. ii. 4; James v. 5; Luke xvi. 19.

[u] 1 Tim. vi. 10; Matt. xix. 23, 24.

into a convenience, and an ornament of our lives, into a considerable blessing, and a ground of much comfort to us. Excluding this use of wealth, or abstracting a capacity of doing good therewith, nothing is more pitiful and despicable than it; it is but like the load or the trappings of an ass: a wise man on that condition would not choose it, or endure to be pestered with it; but would serve it as those philosophers did, who flung it away, that it might not disturb their contemplations: 'tis the power it affords of benefitting men, which only can season and ingratiate it to the relish of such a person: otherwise it is evidently true, which the Wise Man affirms, Prov. xv. 16—*Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.*

3. Again; we may consider, that to dispense our wealth liberally is the best way to preserve it, and to continue masters thereof; what we give is not thrown away, but saved from danger:* while we detain it at home (as it seems to us) it really is abroad, and at adventures; it is out at sea, sailing perilously in storms, near rocks and shelves, amongst pirates; nor can it ever be safe, till it is brought into this port, or ensured this way: when we have bestowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unquestionable safety; in a place where no rapine, no deceit, no mishap, no corruption, can ever by any means come at it.† All our doors and bars, all our forces and guards, all the circumspection and vigilancy we can use, are no defence or security at all in comparison to this disposal thereof: the poor man's stomach is a granary for our corn, which never can be exhausted; the poor man's back is a wardrobe for our clothes, which never can be pillaged; the poor man's pocket is a bank for our money, which never can disappoint or deceive us: all the rich traders in the world may decay and break; but the poor man can never fail, except God himself turn bankrupt; for what we give to the poor, we deliver and intrust in his hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch it; it is laid up in heaven, whither no thief chan climb, where no moth or rust do abide. In despite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich: for God's providence is his estate; God's wisdon and power are his defence; God's love and favour are his reward; God's word is his assurance: who hath said it, that *he which giveth to the poor shall not lack*:[w] no vicissitude therefore of things can surprise him, or find him unfurnished; no disaster can impoverish him; no adversity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reserve against all times and occasions: he that *deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand*,[x] saith the prophet. But, on the other hand, being niggardly is the likeliest course we can take to lose our wealth, and estate; we thereby expose them to danger, and leave them defenceless; we subject them to the envious eye, to the slanderous tongue, to the ravenous and insidious hand; we deprive them of divine protection, which if it be away, the *watchman waketh but in vain*:[y] we provoke God irrecoverably to take it from us, as he did the talent from that unprofitable servant, who did not use it well. We do indeed thereby yield God just cause of war and enmity against us; which being, *omnia dat qui justa negat;* we do forfeit all to divine justice, by denying that portion which belongs to him, and which he claims. Can we hope to live in quiet possession of any thing, if we refuse to pay our due tributes and taxes imposed upon us by our almighty Sovereign; if we live in such rebellion against his authority, such violation of his right, such diffidence to his word? No: *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch*:[z] such is the difference between

* Μηδὲ νόμιζε τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην ἀνάλυμα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ πρόσοδον, μηδὲ δαπάνην, ἀλλὰ πραγματείαν· μείζω γὰρ λαμβάνεις, ἢ δίδως, &c.—Chrys. tom. v. p. 208.

† Μὴ τοίνυν φειδώμεθα χρημάτων· μᾶλλον δὲ φειδώμεθα τῶν χρημάτων· ὁ γὰρ φειδόμενος τῶν ὄντων εἰς τὰς τῶν πενήτων χεῖρας, αὐτὰ ἐναποτίθεται, εἰς τὸν ἄσυλον θησαυρὸν καὶ ληστὰς καὶ οἰκέτας καὶ συκοφάντας κακούργοις, καὶ πάσαις ἐφόδοις ἀνάλωτον.—Chrys. tom. v. Orat. 55.

Multi sancti, et sanctæ omnimodo caventes ipsas velut matres deliciarum divitias dispergendo pauperibus abjecerunt, et tali modo in cœlestibus thesauros tutius condiderunt.—*Aug. Ep.* 121.

[w] Prov. xxviii. 27.
[x] Isa. xxxii. 8.
[y] Psal. cxxxvii. 1.
[z] Prov. xi. 28.

the covetous and the liberal, in point of security and success concerning their estate.

Even according to the human and ordinary way of esteeming things (abstracting from the special providence of God), the liberal person hath, in consequence of his bounty, more real security for his wealth, than this world hath any other: he thereby gets an interest in the gratitude and affection of those whom he obligeth, together with the good-will and respect of all men who are spectators of his virtuous and generous dealing: the hearts and memories of men are repositories to him of a treasure, which nothing can extort from him, or defraud him of. If any mischance should arrive, or any want come near him, all men would be ready to commiserate him, every man would hasten to his succour. As when a haughty, a greedy, or a gripple man do fall into calamity or disgrace, scarce any one regardeth or pitieth him: fortune, deserting such a person, carries all with it, few or none stick to him; his most zealous flatterers are commonly the first that forsake him;* contempt and neglect are the only adherents to his condition; that of the Wise Man appears verified; *He that hideth his eyes from the poor, shall have many a curse.*[a] So the courteous and bountiful person, when fortune seems to frown on him, hath a sure refuge in the good-will and esteem of men; all men, upon the accounts of honour and honesty, take themselves to be concerned in his case, and engaged to favour him; even those, who before were strangers, become then his friends, and in effect discover their affection to him; it, in the common judgment of people, appears an indignity and a disgrace to mankind, that such a man should want or suffer.

4. Nay further, we may consider, that exercising bounty is the most advantageous method of improving and increasing an estate; but that being tenacious and illiberal doth tend to the diminution and decay thereof. The way to obtain a great increase is, to sow much: he that sows little, how can he expect a good crop? It is as true in spiritual husbandry as it is in others, that *what a man soweth, that he shall reap,*[b] both in kind and according to proportion: so that great husbandman St. Paul assureth us: *He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully:*[c] and Solomon means the same, when he saith, *To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.*[d] The way to gain abundantly is, you know well, to trade boldly; he that will not adventure any thing considerable, how can he think of a large return? *Honour the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine;* Prov. iii. 9, 10. 'Tis so likewise in the evangelical negotiations; if we put out much upon score of conscience or charity, we shall be sure to profit much. Liberality is the most beneficial traffick that can be; it is bringing our wares to the best market; it is letting out our money into the best hands: we thereby lend our money to God, who repays with vast usury; an hundred to one is the rate he allows at present, and above a hundred millions to one he will render hereafter; so that if you will be merchants this way, you shall be sure to thrive, you cannot fail to grow rich most easily and speedily: *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered himself:*[e] this is that which St. Paul again argues upon, when, commending the Philippians' free kindness toward him, he says, *Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*[f] Bounty yields καρπὸν πλεονάζοντα, a fruit that multiplies, and abundantly turns to good account; it indeed procuring God's benediction, the fountain of all desirable plenty and prosperity; for *the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.*[g] It is therefore the greatest want of policy, the worst ill-husbandry and unthriftiness that can be, to be sparing this way; he that useth it cannot be thriving; he must spend upon the main stock, and may be sure to get nothing considerable. God ordinarily so proceeds, as to recompense and retaliate men in the same kind wherein they endeavour to please him, or pre-

* Miraris cum tu argento post omnia ponas,
Si nemo præstet quem non merearis amorem. *Hor. Serm.* i. 1.

[a] Prov. xxviii. 27.
[b] Gal. vi. 7, 8.
[c] 2 Cor. ix. 6, 10.
[d] Prov. xi. 18.
[e] Prov. xi. 25.
[f] Phil. iv. 17.
[g] Prov. x. 22.

sume to offend him; so that for them who freely offer him their goods, he in regard thereto will prosper their dealings, and bless their estates (*For this very thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto*, says Moses:[h]) but they who will not lay out any thing for him, he will not concern himself in their success otherwise than to cross it, or, which is worse, to curse it;[i] for if he seem to favour them for a time with some prosperity in their affairs, their condition is much worse thereby, their account will be more grievous, and their fate more disastrous in the end.

5. Further, the contributing part of our goods to the poor will qualify us to enjoy the rest with satisfaction and comfort. The oblation of these first-fruits, as it will sanctify the whole lump of our estate, so it will sweeten it; having offered this well-pleasing sacrifice of piety, having discharged this debt of justice, having paid this tribute of gratitude, our hearts being at rest, and our conscience well satisfied, we shall, like those good people in the Acts, *eat our meat with gladness and singleness of heart*;[j] to see the poor man by our means accommodated, eased, and refreshed, will give a delicious relish to all our enjoyments. But withholding his portion from the poor, as it will pollute and profane all our estate, so it will render the fruition thereof sour or unsavoury to us: for can we with any content taste our dainties, or view our plenties, while the poor man stands in sight pining with hunger?* Can we without regret see our walls clothed with tapestry, our horses decked with golden trappings, our attendants strutting in wanton gaiety, while our honest poor brother appears half naked, and trembling with cold? Can we carry on one finger enough to furnish ten poor people with necessaries, and have the heart within us, without shame and displeasure, to see them want? No; the sense of our impiety and ingratitude toward God, of our inhumanity and unworthiness toward our neighbour, will not fail (if ever we considerately reflect on our behaviour) to sting us with cruel remorse and self-condemnation; the clamours of want and misery surrounding us will pierce our ears, and wound our hearts; the frequent objects of pity and mercy, do what we can to banish them from our prospect or regard, will so assail, and so pursue us, as to disturb the freedom of our enjoyments, to quash the briskness of our mirth, to allay the sweetness of our pleasure; yea rather, if stupidity and obduration have not seized on us, to imbitter all unto us; we shall feel that true, which Zophar speaks of the cruel and covetous oppressor: *Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly—he shall not rejoice in his substance—in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.*[k]

6. I shall touch but one consideration more, persuasive of this practice; it is this: The peculiar nature of our religion specially requires it, and the honour thereof exacts it from us; nothing better suits Christianity, nothing more graces it, than liberality; nothing is more inconsistent therewith, or more disparageth it, than being miserable and sordid. A Christian niggard is the veriest nonsense than can be; for what is a Christian? what, but a man who adores God alone, who loves God above all things, who reposes all his trust and confidence in God? What is he, but one who undertaketh to imitate the most good and bountiful God; to follow, as the best pattern of his practice, the most benign and charitable Jesus, the Son of God; to obey the laws of God, and his Christ, the sum and substance of which is charity; half whose religion doth consist in loving his neighbour as himself? What is he, further, but one who hath renounced this world, with all the vain pomps and pleasures of it; who professes himself in disposition and affection of mind to forsake all things for Christ's sake; who pretends little to value, affect, or care for any thing under heaven; having all his main concernments and treasures, his heart, his hopes, and his happiness, in another world? Such is a Christian. And what is a niggard? All things quite contrary: one

* Ἑλλὺς ὁ πένης, εἰς τοῦτον ἀπέρευξαί τι τῶν περιττῶν· τί καὶ σὺ κάμνεις ἀπεπτῶν, καὶ οὗτος πεινῶν, καὶ σὺ κραιπαλῶν, καὶ οὗτος ὑδεριῶν, καὶ σὺ κάρῳ βαρύνων, καὶ οὗτος περιτρεπόμενος νόσῳ; — Nazian. Orat. 27.

[h] Deut. xv. 18.

[i] Psal. lxxiii. 17.

[j] Acts ii. 46.

[k] Job xx. 18, 20, 22.

whose practice manifestly shows him to worship another thing beside and before God; to love mammon above God, and more to confide in it, than in him; one who bears small good-will, kindness, or pity, toward his brother; who is little affected or concerned with things future or celestial; whose mind and heart are riveted to this world; whose hopes and happinesses are settled here below; whose soul is deeply immersed and buried in earth; one who, according to constant habit, notoriously breaketh the two great heads of Christian duty, *loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself;* it is, therefore, by comparing those things, very plain, that we pretend to reconcile gross contradictions and inconsistencies, if we profess ourselves to be Christians, and are illiberal. It is indeed the special grace and glory of our religion, that it consisteth not in barren speculations, or empty formalities, or forward professions; not in fancying curiously, or speaking zealously, or looking demurely; but in really producing sensible fruits of goodness; in doing, as St. Paul signifies, *things good and profitable unto men*,[l] such as those chiefly are, of which we speak. The most gracious wisdom of God hath so modelled our religion, that according to it piety and charity are the same thing; that we can never express ourselves more dutiful toward him, or better please him, or more truly glorify him, than when we are kind and good to our poor brother. We grossly mistake, if we take giving of alms to be a Jewish or Popish practice, suitable to children and dullards in religion, beneath so refined, so improved, so loftily spiritual gallants as we. No: 'tis a duty most properly and most highly Christian, as none more; a most goodly fruit of grace, and a most faithful mark thereof: *By the experiment of this ministration, we* (as St. Paul saith) *glorify God for our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for our liberal distribution unto our brethren and unto all men*:[m] without it, our faith is dead and senseless, our high attainments are fond presumptions, our fine notions and delicate spiritualities are in truth but silly dreams, the issues of a proud and ignorant fancy; he that appears hard-hearted and close-fisted towards his needy brother, let him think or call himself what he pleaseth, he plainly is no Christian, but a blemish, a reproach, and a scandal to that honourable name.

7. To all these considerations and reasons inducing to the practice of this kind of charity, I might subjoin examples, and set before you the fairest copies that can be imagined thereof. We have for it the pattern of God himself, who is infinitely munificent and merciful; *from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth; who giveth life, and breath, and all things unto all;* who *giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.*[n] We have the example of the Son of God, who out of pure charity did freely part with the riches and glories of eternity, voluntarily embracing extreme poverty and want for our sake, that we who were poor might be enriched, we that were miserable might become happy; who *went about doing good*,[o] spent all his life in painful dispensation of beneficence, and relieving the needs of men in every kind. We have the blessed patriarchs to follow, who at God's pleasure and call did readily leave their country, their friends, their goods, and all they had. We have the practice of the holy apostles, who freely *let go all to follow their Lord*;[p] who cheerfully sustained all sorts of losses, disgraces, and pains, for promoting the honour of God, and procuring good unto men: we have to move and encourage us hereto the first and best Christians, most full of grace and holy zeal, who, *so many as were possessors of lands and houses, did sell them*, and did impart the price of them to the community, *so that there was none poor among them*, and that *distribution was made to every one as he had need.*[q] We have all the saints and eminent servants of God in all times, who have been high and wonderful in the performance of these duties. I could tell you of the blessed martyr St. Cyprian,[r] who was liberal, by wholesale, bestowing all at once a fair estate on God and the poor; of the renowned bishop

[l] Tit. iii. 8.
[m] 2 Cor. ix. 13.
[n] James i. 5, 17; Acts xvii. 25; 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[o] Acts x. 38.
[p] Matt. xix. 27.
[q] Acts iv. 34, 35.
[r] Pontius in Vit. Cypr.; Gr. Naz. Or. 40; Sulp. Sev.

St. Basil, who constantly waited on the sick, and kissed their sores; of the most pious confessor St. Martin, who having but one coat left, and seeing a poor man that wanted clothes, tore it in two pieces, and gave one to that *poor man:* and many like instances out of authentic history might be produced, apt to provoke our imitation. I might also, to beget emulation and shame in us, represent exemplary practices of humanity and charity even in Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans (such as in these cold days might pass for more than ordinary among us;) but I shall only propound one present and sensible example; that of this noble city, whose public bounty and charity in all kinds (in education of orphans, in curing the diseased both in body and mind, in provision for the poor, in relieving all sorts of necessities and miseries) let me earnestly entreat and exhort us all for God's sake, as we are able, by our private charity to imitate, to encourage, and to assist; let us do this so much the more willingly and freely, as the sad circumstances of things, by God's judgments brought upon us, do plainly require that the public charity itself (lying under so great impediments, discouragements, and distresses) should be supported, supplied, and relieved by particular liberality. No words that I can devise will be so apt to affect and move you, as the case itself, if you please to consider it: hear it therefore speaking, and, I pray, with a pious and charitable disposition of mind attend thereto:—

A true Report, &c.

For this excellent pattern of pious bounty and mercy, let us heartily thank Almighty God; let us humbly implore God's blessing on the future management of it; let us pay due respects to the worthy promoters thereof, and pray for rewards upon them, answerable to their charitable care and industry employed therein; let us also, according to our ability, perform our duty in following and furthering it: for encouragement to which practice, give me leave briefly to reflect upon the latter part of my text; which represents some instances of the felicity proper to a bountiful person, or some rewards peculiar to the exercising the duties of bounty and mercy.

The first is, *His righteousness endureth for ever.* These words are capable of various senses, or of divers respects: they may import, that the fame and remembrance of his bounty is very durable, or that the effects thereof do lastingly continue, or that eternal rewards are designed thereto; they may respect the bountiful man himself, or his posterity here; they may simply relate to an endurance in God's regard and care; or they may with that also comprehend a continuance in the good memory and honorable mention of men. Now in truth, according to all these interpretations, the bountiful man's righteousness doth endure for ever, that is, very lastingly (or so long as the special nature of the case doth bear), in any sense; or for an absolute perpetuity in some sense: the words in their plenitude do naturally and without straining involve so many truths; none of which, therefore, we think fit to exclude, but shall briefly touch them all.

1. As for future reputation and fame (which that it in part is intended here, that which precedes, *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*, doth argue), it is evident, that it peculiarly attends upon this practice: the bountiful persons is especially that *just* man, whose *memory is blessed*[s] (is μετ' ἐγκωμίων, as the Greek renders it; that is, is prosecuted with commendations and praises.) No spices can so embalm a man, no monument can so preserve his name and memory, as works of beneficence; no other fame is comparably so precious, or truly glorious, as that which grows from thence: the renown of power and prowess, of wit or learning, of any wisdom or skill, may dwell in the fancies of men with some admiration: but the remembrance of bounty reigns in their hearts with cordial esteem and affection; there erecting immoveable trophies over death and oblivion, and thence spreading itself through the tongues of men with sincere and sprightly commendations. The bountiful man's very dust is fragrant, and his grave venerable; his name is never mentioned without respect; his actions have always these best echoes, with innumerable iterations resounding after them: *His goods shall be established, and the congregation shall declare his alms;* Ecclus.

[s] Prov. x. 7.

xxxii. 11. This was a true friend to mankind; this was a real benefactor to the world; this was a man good in earnest, and pious to good purpose.

2. The effects of his righteousness are likewise very durable: when he has departed hence, and in person is no more seen, he remains visible and sensible in the footsteps and fruits of his goodness; the poor still beholds him present in the subsistence of himself and his family; the sick man feels him in the refreshment which he yet enjoys by his provision; he supervives in the heart of the afflicted, which still resents the comfort, and rejoices in the ease, which he procured him; all the world derives benefit from him by the edification it receiveth from his example; religion obtaineth profit and ornament, God himself enjoyeth glory and praise, from his righteousness.

3. His righteousness also endureth in respect to his posterity. It is an usual plea for tenacity and parsimony, that care must be had of posterity, that enough must be provided and laid up for the family: but in truth this is a very absurd excuse; and doing according thereto is a very preposterous method of proceeding toward that end; it is really the greatest improvidence in that respect, and the truest neglect that can be of our children: for so doing, together with a seeming estate, we entail a real curse upon them: we divest them of God's protection and benediction (the only sure preservatives of an estate;) we leave them heirs of nothing so much as of punishments due to our ingratitude, our infidelity, our impiety and injustice, both toward God and man: whereas by liberally bestowing on the poor, we demise unto them God's blessing, which is the best inheritance; we recommend them to God's special care, which is the best tuition; we leave them God's protection and providence, which are a wealth indefectible and inexhaustible; we constitute God their guardian, who will most faithfully manage, and most wisely improve their substance, both that which we leave to them, and that which we gave for them to the poor; we thereby in good part entitle them to the rewards appropriate to our pious charity, our faith, our gratitude, our self-denial, our justice, to whatever of good is virtually contained in our acts of bounty; to omit the honour and goodwill of men, which constantly adhere to the bountiful man's house and family. Prov. xiii. 22: *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.* It is therefore expressly mentioned in Scripture as a recompense peculiar to this virtue, that security from want and all happiness do attend the posterity of the bountiful person: *He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed,*[t] saith David of him generally: and David also particularly observed, that in all the course of his long life he could find no exception to the rule: *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*[u]

4. His righteousness also endureth for ever in the perpetual favour of God, and in the eternal rewards which God will confer upon him, who, out of conscience and reverence toward God, out of goodwill and kindness toward his brother, hath dispersed, and given to the poor. *God will not* (as the apostle saith) *be unjust to forget his labour of charity in ministering*[v] to his poor brother: from the seed which he *hath sown to the Spirit,*[w] he shall assuredly reap a most plentiful crop of blessings spiritual; he shall effectually enjoy *the good foundation* that he hath *stored up:*[x] for the goods he hath sold and delivered, he shall *bona fide* receive his bargain, *the hidden treasure* and *precious pearl* of eternal life; for this best improvement of his talent of worldly riches, he shall hear the *Euge, bone serve, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into thy master's joy:*[y] he shall at last find God infinitely more bountiful to him, than he hath been unto the poor.

Thus when all the flashes of sensual pleasure are quite extinct; when all the flowers of secular glory are withered away; when all earthly treasures are buried in darkness; when this world and all the fashion of it are utterly vanished and gone, the bountiful man's state will still be firm and flourishing, and *his righteousness shall endure for ever.*

It follows, *His horn shall be exalted with honour.* A horn is an emblem of

[t] Psal. xxxvii. 26.
[u] Psal. xxxvii. 25.
[v] Heb. vi. 10.
[w] Gal. vi. 8.
[x] 1 Tim. vi. 19.
[y] Matt. xiii. 46; xxv. 21, 23.

power; for in it the beasts' strength, offensive and defensive, doth consist; and of plenty, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of sanctity, for that in it was put the holy oil, with which kings were consecrated;[z] and of dignity, both in consequence upon the reasons mentioned (as denoting might, and influence, and sacredness accompanying sovereign dignity), and because also it is an especial beauty and ornament to the creature which hath it; so that this expression, *His horn shall be exalted with honour*, may be supposed to import, that an abundance of high and holy, of firm and solid honour, shall attend upon the bountiful person. And that so it truly shall, may from many considerations appear.

1. Honour is inseparably annexed thereto, as its natural companion and shadow. God hath impressed upon all virtue a majesty and a beauty, which do command respect, and with a kindly violence extort veneration from men: such is the natural constitution of our souls, that as our sense necessarily liketh what is fair and sweet, so our mind unavoidably will esteem what is virtuous and worthy; all good actions as such are honourable: but of all virtues, beneficence doth with most unquestionable right claim honour, and with irresistible force procures it; as it is indeed the most divine of virtues, so men are most apt to venerate them whom they observe eminently to practice it. Other virtues men see, and approve as goodly to the sight; but this they taste and feel; this by most sensible experience they find to be pleasant and profitable, and cannot therefore but highly prize it.* They, who *do their alms before men*, although out of an unworthy vain-glorious design, *have* yet (as our Saviour intimates) *their reward;* Matt. vi. 1; they fail not to get honour thereby; and even so have no bad pennyworth; for, in the Wise Man's judgment, *a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches;*[a] they receive at least fine air, for gross earth; and things very spiritual, for things most material; they obtain that which every man doth naturally desire and prize, for that which only fashion in some places endeareth and commendeth; they get the end for the means; for scarce any man seeketh wealth for itself, but either for honour, or for virtue's sake, that he may live creditably, or may do good therewith:* necessity is served with a little, pleasure may be satisfied with a competence; abundance is required only to support honour or promote good; and honour by a natural connexion adhereth to bounty. *He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour;* Prov. xxi. 21.

2. But further, an accession of honour, according to gracious promise (grounded upon somewhat of special reason, of equity and decency in the thing itself), is due from God unto the bountiful person, and is by special providence surely conferred on him. There is no kind of piety, or instance of obedience, whereby God himself is more signally honoured, than by this. These are chiefly those *good works*, the which *men seeing*, are apt to *glorify our Father which is in heaven;* Phil. i. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God.*[b] To these fruits that is most applicable which our Lord saith, *Hereby is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit;* for as *he that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker;* so *he honoureth him that hath mercy on the poor.*[c] The comfortable experience of good in this sort of actions will most readily dispose men to admire and commend the excellency, the wisdom, the goodness, of the divine laws; will therefore procure God hearty praise and thanks for them: for, as St. Paul teacheth us, *The administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whilst by experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.*[d] Since, then, God is so peculiarly honoured by this practice, it is but equal and fit that God should remunerate it with hon-

* Φιλοῦνται σχεδὸν μάλιστα οἱ ἐλευθέριοτεροι τῶν ἐπ' ἀρετῆς, ὠφέλιμοι γάρ.—Arist.

[a] 1 Sam. xvi. 13; 1 Kings i. 39.

[a] Prov. xxii. 1.

* Αἱ γὰρ δυναστείαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμήν ἐστιν αἱρετά.—Arist.

[b] Matt. v. 16.

[c] John. xv. 8; Prov. xiv. 31.

[d] 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.

our: God's noble goodness will not let him seem defective in any sort of beneficial correspondence toward us; we shall never be able to yield him any kind of good thing in duty, which he will not be more apt to render us in grace: they who, as Solomon speaketh, *honour God with their substance*,[e] shall by God certainly be honoured with his blessing: reason intimates so much, and we beside have God's express word for it: *Them* (saith he) *who honour me, I will honour*.[f] He that absolutely and independently is the fountain of all honour, *from whom* (as good king David saith) *riches and honour cometh*, for that *he reigneth over all*,[g] he will assuredly prefer and dignify those who have been at special care and cost to advance his honour. He that hath the *hearts of all men in his hands*, and *fashioneth them* as he pleaseth,[h] will raise the bountiful man in the judgments and affections of men. He that ordereth all the events of things, and disposeth success as he thinks fit, will cause the bountiful person's enterprises to prosper, and come off with credit. He will not suffer the reputation of so real an honourer of himself to be extremely slurred by disaster, to be blasted by slander, to be supplanted by envy or malice; but will *bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day*.[i]

3. God will thus exalt the bountiful man's horn even here in this world, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in the future state: he shall there be set at the right hand, in a most honourable place and rank, among the chief friends and favourites of the heavenly King, in happy consortship with the holy angels and blessed saints; where, in recompense of his pious bounty, he shall, from the bountiful hands of his most gracious Lord, receive *an incorruptible crown of righteousness*, and *an unfading crown of glory*. The which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all praise. Amen.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.[j] Amen.

[e] Prov. iii. 9. [f] 1 Sam. ii. 30.
[g] 1 Chron. xxix. 12.
[h] Prov. xxi. 1; Psal. xxxiii. 15.
[i] Psal. xxxvii. 9.

SERMON XXXII.

UPON THE PASSION OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

PHIL. ii. 8.—*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

WHEN, in consequence of the original apostacy from God, which did banish us from paradise, and by continued rebellions against him, inevitable to our corrupt and impotent nature, mankind had forfeited the amity of God (the chief of all goods, the fountain of all happiness), and had incurred his displeasure (the greatest of all evils, the foundation of all misery;[a])—

When poor man having deserted his natural Lord and Protector, *other lords had got dominion over him*, so that he was captivated by the foul, malicious, cruel spirits, and enslaved to his own vain mind, to vile lusts, to wild passions;[b]—

When, according to an eternal rule of justice, that sin deserveth punishment,[c] and by an express law, wherein death was enacted to the transgressors of God's command, the root of our stock, and consequently all its branches, stood adjudged to utter destruction;[d]—

When, according to St. Paul's expressions, *all the world was become guilty before God* (or, subjected to God's judgment:) *all men* (Jews and Gentiles) *were under sin, under condemnation, under the curse; all men were concluded into disobedience, and shut up together* (as close prisoners) *under sin; all men had sinned, and come short of the glory of*

[j] Heb. xiii. 20, 21.
[a] Cyril. c. Jul. viii. p. 278; ix. p. 303; John iii. 36; Col. iii. 6.
[b] Iren. iii. 33, 34; Isa. xxvi. 13.
[c] Gen. iv. 7; ii. 17. [d] Iren. v. 16.

God; death had passed over all, because all had sinned;[e]—

When for ûs, being plunged into so wretched a condition, no visible remedy did appear, no possible redress could be obtained here below: (for what means could we have of recovering God's favour, who were apt perpetualy to contract new debts and guilts but not able to discharge any old scores? What capacity of mind or will had we to entertain mercy, who were no less stubbornly perverse and obdurate in our crimes, than ignorant or infirm? How could we be reconciled unto Heaven, who had an innate antipathy to God and goodness? [*Sin*, according to our natural state, and secluding evangelical grace, *reigning in our mortal bodies, no good thing dwelling in us;* there being a predominant *law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin:* a main ingredient of our *old man* being a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity to God*, and *cannot submit to his law;* we being *alienated from the life of God by the blindness of our hearts, and enemies in our minds by wicked works:*] How could we revive to any good hope, who were *dead in trespasses and sins*, God having withdrawn his quickening Spirit?[f] How at last could we for one moment stand upright in God's sight, upon the natural terms, excluding all sin, and exacting perfect obedience?)—

When this, I say, was our forlorn and desperate case, then Almighty God, out of his infinite goodness, was pleased to look upon us (as he sometime did upon Jerusalem, *lying polluted in her blood*)[g] with an eye of pity and mercy, so as graciously to design a redemption for us out of all that woful distress: and no sooner by his incomprehensible wisdom did he foresee we should lose ourselves, than by his immense grace he did conclude to restore us.

But how could this happy design well be compassed? How, in consistence with the glory, with the justice, with the truth of God, could such enemies be reconciled, such offender be pardoned, such wretches be saved?[h] Would the omnipotent Majesty, so affronted, deign to treat with his rebels immediately, without an intercessor or advocate? Would the sovereign Governor of the world suffer thus notoriously his right to be violated, his authority to be slighted, his honour to be trampled on, without some notable vindication or satisfaction? Would the great Patron of justice relax the terms of it, or ever permit a gross breach thereof to pass with impunity? Would the immutable God of truth expose his veracity or his constancy to suspicion, by so reversing that peremptory sentence of death upon sinners, that it should not in a sort eminently be accomplished?[i] Would the most righteous and most holy God let slip an opportunity so advantageous for demonstrating his perfect love of innocence, and abhorrence of iniquity? Could we therefore well be cleared from our guilt without an expiation, or reinstated in freedom without a ransom, or exempted from condemnation without some punishment?

No: God was so pleased to prosecute his designs of goodness and mercy, as thereby nowise to impair or obscure, but rather to advance and illustrate the glories of his sovereign dignity, of his severe justice, of his immaculate holiness, of his unchangeable steadiness in word and purpose. He accordingly would be sued to for peace and mercy: nor would he grant them absolutely, without due compensations for the wrongs he had sustained; yet so, that his goodness did find us a Mediator, and furnish us with means to satisfy him. He would not condescend to a simple remission of our debts; yet so, that, saving his right and honour, he did stoop lower for an effectual abolition of them. He would make good his word, not to let our trespasses go unpunished; yet so, that by our punishment we might receive advantage. He would manifest his detestation of wickedness in a way more illustrious

[e] Rom. iii. 19; ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ.—Rom. iii. 9; v. 16, 18; Gal. iii. 10; Rom. xi. 32; εἰς ἀπείθειαν.—Gal. iii. 22; Rom. iii. 23; v. 12.

[f] Rom. vi. 12, 14, 20; vii. 18, 5; vii. 23; vi. 6; Coloss. iii. 9; Eph. iv. 22; Rom. viii. 7; οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται.—Eph. iv. 18; Coloss. i. 21; Rom. v. 10; Eph. ii. v; (Rom. vi. 13, 11;) Psal. cxliii. 2; Exod. xxxiv. 7.

[g] Ezek. xvi. 6.

[h] Eph. i. 4, 9, 11, and iii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 20; Rev. xiii. 8; Rom. xvi. 25; Tit. i. 2.

[i] Athan. de Incarn.; Gen. ii. 17.

than if he had persecuted it down to hell, and irreversibly doomed it to endless torment.

But how might these things be effected? Where was there a Mediator proper and worthy to intercede for us? Who could presume to solicit and plead in our behalf? Who should dare to put himself between God and us, or offer to screen mankind from the divine wrath and vengeance? Who had so great an interest in the court of heaven as to ingratiate such a brood of apostate enemies thereto? Who could assume the confidence to propose terms of reconciliation, or to agitate a new covenant, wherewith God might be satisfied, and whereby we might be saved? Where, in heaven or earth, could there be found a priest fit to atone for sins so vastly numerous, so extremely heinous? And whence should a sacrifice be taken, of value sufficient to expiate for so manifold enormities, committed against the infinite Majesty of Heaven? Who could *find out the everlasting redemption** of innumerable souls, or lay down a competent ransom for them all? Not to say, could also purchase for them eternal life and bliss?

These are questions which would puzzle all the wit of man, yea, would gravel all the wisdom of angels to resolve: for plain it is, that no creature on earth, none in heaven, could well undertake or perform this work.

Where on earth, among the degenerate sons of Adam, could be found *such an high priest as became us, holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners*?[j] and how could a man, however innocent and pure as a seraphim, so perform his duty, as to do more than merit or satisfy for himself? How many lives could the life of one man serve to ransom; seeing that it is asserted of the greatest and richest among men, that *none of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him*?[k]

And how could available help in this case be expected from any of the angelical host? seeing (beside their being in nature different from us, and thence improper to merit or satisfy for us; beside their comparative meanness, and infinite distance from the majesty of God) they are but our fellow-servants, and have obligations to discharge for themselves, and cannot be solvent for more than for their own debts of gratitude and service to their infinitely bountiful creator; they also themselves needing a Saviour, to preserve them by his grace in their happy state?

Indeed, no creature might aspire to so august an honour, none could achieve so marvellous a work, as to redeem from infinite guilt and misery the noblest part of all the visible creation: none could presume to invade that high prerogative of God, or attempt to infringe the truth of that reiterated proclamation, *I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour.*[l]

Wherefore, seeing that a supereminent dignity of person was required in our Mediator, and that an immense value was to be presented for our ransom; seeing that *God saw there was no man, and wondered* (or took special notice) *that there was no intercessor;* it must be *his arm* alone that could *bring salvation;*[m] none beside God himself could intermeddle therein.

But how could God undertake the business? Could he become a suitor or intercessor to his offended self? Could he present a sacrifice, or disburse a satisfaction to his own justice? Could God alone contract and stipulate with God in our behalf? No: surely man also must concur in the transaction: some amends must issue from him, somewhat must be paid out of our stock: human will and consent must be interposed, to ratify a firm covenant with us, inducing obligation on our part. It was decent and expedient, that as man, by wilful transgression and presumptuous self-pleasing, had so highly offended, injured, and dishonoured his Maker; so man also, by willing obedience, and patient submission to God's pleasure, should greatly content, right, and glorify him.

Here then, did lie the stress; this was the knot, which only Divine wisdom could loose. And so indeed it did in a most effectual and admirable way: for in correspondence to all the exigencies of the case (that God and man both might

* Αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὑράμενος.—Heb. ix. 12.

[j] Heb. vii. 26. [k] Psal. xlix. 7.

[l] Isa. xliii. 11; xlv. 21; Hos. xiii. 4.

[m] Isa. lix. 16; κατενόησε, LXX.

act their part in saving us), the blessed eternal Word, the only Son of God, by the good-will of his Father, did vouchsafe to intercede for us, and to undertake our redemption; in order thereto voluntarily being sent down from heaven, assuming human flesh, subjecting himself to all the infirmities of our frail nature, and to the worst inconveniences of our low condition; therein meriting God's favour to us by a perfect obedience to the law, and satisfying God's justice by a most patient endurance of pains in our behalf; in completion of all, willingly laying down his life for the ransom of our souls, and pouring forth his blood in sacrifice for our sins.[n]

This is the great and wonderful *mystery of godliness* (or of our holy religion), the which St. Paul here doth express, in these words concerning our blessed Savour: *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*[o]

In which words are contained divers points very observable. But seeing the time will not allow me to treat on them in any measure as they deserve, I shall (waiving all the rest) insist but upon one particular, couched in the last words, *even the death of the cross;** which by a special emphasis do excite us to consider the manner of that holy passion which we now commemorate; the contemplation whereof, as it is most seasonable, so it is ever very profitable.

Now, then, in this kind of passion we may consider divers notable adjuncts; namely these: 1. Its being in appearance criminal; 2. Its being most bitter and painful; 3. Its being most ignominious and shameful; 4. Its peculiar advantageousness to the designs of our Lord in suffering; 5. Its practical efficacy.

1. We may consider our Lord's suffering as criminal; or as in semblance being an execution of justice upon him. *He* (as the prophet foretold of him) *was numbered among the transgressors;*[p] and God (saith St. Paul) *made him sin for us, who knew no sin;*[q] that is, God ordered him to be treated as a most sinful or criminous person, who in himself was perfectly innocent, and void of the least inclination to offend.

So in effect it was, that he was impeached of the highest crimes; as a violator of the divine laws in divers instances; as a designer to subvert their religion and temple; as an impostor, deluding and seducing the people; as a blasphemer, assuming to himself the properties and prerogatives of God; as a seditious and rebellious person, *perverting the nation*, inhibiting payments of tribute to Cæsar, usurping royal authority, and styling himself *Christ a king:* in a word, as a malefactor, or one guilty of enormous offences; so his persecutors avowed to Pilate *If* (saith they) *he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.*[r] As such he was represented and arraigned; as such although by a sentence wrested by a malicious importunity, against the will and conscience of the judge, he was condemned, and accordingly suffered death.

Now whereas any death or passion of our Lord, as being in itself immensely valuable, and most precious in the sight of God, might have been sufficient toward the accomplishment of his general designs (the appeasing of God's wrath, the satisfaction of divine justice, the expiation of our guilt;) it may be inquired, why God should thus expose him, or why he should choose to suffer under this odious and ugly character?* Which inquiry is the more considerable, because it is especially this circumstance which crosseth the fleshly sense and worldly prejudices of men, so as to have rendered the gospel offensive to the superstitious Jews, and despicable to conceited Gentiles. For so Tryphon in Justine Martyr, al-

* Θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

[n] Eph. i. 8; Luke i. 78; Eph. i. 5; Tit. iii. 4; Rom. v. 8; Gal. iv. 4; John vi. 38; Heb. x. 7; John i. 14; Heb. v. 2; iv. 15; Eph. i. 6; Const. Apost. viii. 12; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Tit. ii. 14; Heb. ix. 15; ii. 9; Col. i. 22.

[o] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

* Cur si Deus fuit, et mori voluit, non saltem honesto aliquo mortis genere affectus est? &c.—*Lact.* iv. 26. *Just. M. Dial.* p. 317.

[p] Isa. liii. 12. [q] 2 Cor. v. 21.

[r] John v. 18; x. 30, &c. vii. 12; Matt. xxvi. 61; xxvii. 40; Luke xxiii. 2; Matt. xxvii. 63; Const. Apost. v. 14; κακοποιός. John xviii. 30.

though, from conviction by testimonies of scripture, he did admit the Messias was to suffer *hardly*, yet that it should be in this *accursed* manner, he could not digest. So the great adversaries of Christianity (Celsus, Porphyry, Julian) did with most contempt urge this exception against it.[s] So St. Paul did observe, that *Christ crucified was unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness.*[t] Wherefore, to avoid those scandals, and that we may better admire the wisdom of God in this dispensation, it may be fit to assign some reasons intimated in holy scripture, or bearing conformity to its doctrine, why it was thus ordered. Such are these:—

1. As our Saviour freely did undertake a life of greatest meanness and hardship, so upon the like accounts he might be pleased to undergo a death most loathsome and uncomfortable. There is nothing to man's nature (especially to the best natures, in which modesty and ingenuity do survive) more abominable than such a death. God for good purposes hath planted in our constitution a quick sense of disgrace; and, of all disgraces, that which proceedeth from an imputation of crimes is most pungent, and being conscious of our innocence doth heighten the smart; and to reflect upon ourselves dying under it, leaving the world with an indelible stain upon our name and memory, is yet more grievous. Even to languish by degrees, enduring the torments of a long, however sharp disease, would to an honest mind seem more eligible, than in this manner, being reputed and handled as a villain, to find quick and easy despatch.

Of which human resentment may we not observe a touch in that expostulation, *Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?*[u] If as a man he did not like to be prosecuted as a thief; yet willingly did he choose it, as he did other most distasteful* things pertaining to our nature (*the likeness of man*), and incident to that low condition (*the form of a servant*), into which he did put himself: such as were, to endure penury, and to fare hardly, to be slighted, envied, hated, reproached, through all his course of life.

It is well said by a pagan philosopher, that *no man doth express such a respect and devotion to virtue, as doth he who forfeiteth the repute of being a good man, that he may not lose the conscience of being such.** This our Lord willingly made his case, being content not only to expose his life, but to prostitute his fame, for the interests of goodness.

Had he died otherwise, he might have seemed to purchase our welfare at a somewhat easier rate; he had not been so complete a sufferer; he had not tasted the worst that man is liable to endure: there had been a comfort in seeming innocent, detracting from the perfection of his sufferance.

Whereas, therefore, he often was in hazard of death, both from the clandestine machinations and the outrageous violences of those who maligned him, he did industriously shun a death so plausible, and honourable, if I may so speak;[v] it being not so disgraceful to fall by private malice, or by sudden rage, as by the solemn deliberate proceeding of men in public authority and principal credit.

Accordingly, this kind of death did not fall upon him by surprise or by chance; but he did *from the beginning*[w] foresee it; he plainly with satisfaction did aim at it: he, as it is related in the Gospels, did *show* his disciples, that it was incumbent on him by God's appointment and his own choice; that *he ought* (it is said) *to suffer many things, to be rejected by the chief priests, elders, and scribes, to be vilified by them, to be delivered up to the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified*,[x] as a flagitious slave. Thus would our blessed Saviour, in conformity to the rest of his voluntary afflictions, and for a consummation of them, not only suffer in his body by sore wounds and bruises, and in his soul by doleful agonies, but in his name also and reputation by the foulest scand-

[s] Orig. c. Cels. ii. p. 83; vii. p. 368; Aug. de Civ. D. 10, 28; Cyril. c. Jul. vi. p. 194.
[t] 1 Cor. i. 23.
[u] Luke xxii. 52; Matt. xxvi. 55.

* Nemo mihi videtur pluris æstimare virtutem, nemo illi magis esse devotus, quam qui boni viri famam perdidit, ne conscientiam perderet.—*Sen. Ep.* 81.
[v] John v. 18; viii. 37, 40, 59; vii. 1, 19, 25; x. 32, 39.
[w] John vi. 64.
[x] Matt. xvi. 21; Luke ix. 22; xviii. 32, 33; Mark ix. 31.

dals; undergoing as well all the infamy as the infirmity which did belong to us, or might befall us: thus meaning by all means throughly to express his charity, and exercise his compassion toward us; thus advancing his merit, and discharging the utmost satisfaction in our behalf.

2. Death passing on him as a malefactor by public sentence, did best suit to the nature of his undertaking, was most congruous to his intent, did most aptly represent what he was doing, and imply the reason of his performance. For we all are guilty in a most high degree, and in a manner very notorious; the foulest shame, together with the sharpest pain, is due to us for affronting our glorious Maker; we deserve an open condemnation and exemplary punishment: wherefore he, undertaking in our stead to bear all, and fully to satisfy for us, was pleased to undergo the like judgment and usage; being termed, being treated as we should have been, in quality of an heinous malefactor, as we in truth are. What we had really acted in dishonouring and usurping upon God, in disordering the world, in perverting others, that was imputed to him; and the punishment due to that guilt was inflicted on him. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.*[y] He therefore did not only sustain an equivalent pain for us, but in a sort did bear an equal blame with us, before God and man.

3. Seeing, *by the determinate counsel of God*,[z] it was appointed that our Lord should die for us, and that not in a natural, but violent way, so as perfectly to satisfy God's justice, to vindicate his honour, to evidence both his indignation against sin, and willingness to be appeased; it was most fit that affair should be transacted in a way wherein God's right is most nearly concerned, and his providence most plainly discernible; wherein it should be most apparent that God did exact and inflict the punishment, that our Lord did freely yield to it, and submissively undergo it, upon those very accounts. All *judgment* (as Moses of old did say) *is God's*,[a] or is administered by authority derived from him, in his name, for his interest; all magistrates being his officers and instruments, whereby he governeth and ordereth the world, his natural kingdom: whence that which is acted in way of formal judgment by persons in authority. God himself may be deemed in a more special and immediate manner to execute it, as being done by his commission, in his stead, on his behalf, with his peculiar superintendence. It was therefore in our Lord a signal act of deference to God's authority and justice, becoming the person sustained by him of our Mediator and Proxy, to undergo such a judgment, and such a punishment; whereby he received a doom as it were from God's own mouth, uttered by his ministers, and bare the stroke of justice from God's hand, represented by his instruments. Whence very seasonably and patiently did he reply to Pilate, *Thou hadst no power over me* (or *against me*), *except it were given thee from above*:[b] implying that it was in regard to the originally supreme authority of God his father, and to his particular appointment upon this occasion, that our Saviour did then frankly subject himself to those inferior powers, as to the proper ministers of divine justice. Had he suffered in any other way, by the private malice or passion of men, God's special providence in that case had been less visible, and our Lord's obedience not so remarkable. And if he must die by public hands, it must be as a crimnal, under a pretence of guilt and demerit: there must be a formal process, how full soever of mockery and outrage; there must be testimonies produced, how void soever of truth or probability; there must be a sentence pronounced, although most corrupt and injurious: for no man is in this way persecuted, without colour of desert: otherwise it would cease to be public authority, and become lawless violence; the persecutor then would put off the face of a magistrate, and appear as a cut-throat or a robber.

4. In fine, our Saviour hardly with such advantage, in any other way could have displayed all kinds of virtue and goodness, to the honour of God, to the edification of men, to the furtherance of our salvation.

The judgment-hall, with all the passa-

[y] Isa. liii. 6.
[z] Acts ii. 23.
[a] Deut. i. 17
[b] John xix. 11; κατ' ἐμοῦ.

ges leading him thither, and thence to execution, attended with guards of soldiers, amidst the crowds and clamours of people, were as so many theatres, on which he had opportune convenience, in the full eye of the world, to act divers parts of sublimest virtue; to express his insuperable constancy, in attesting truth and maintaining a good conscience;[c] his meekness, in calmly bearing the greatest wrongs; his patience, in contentedly enduring the saddest adversities; his entire resignation to the will and providence of God; his peaceable submission to the law and power of man; his admirable charity, in pitying, in excusing, in obliging those by his good wishes, and earnest prayers for their pardon, who in a manner so injurious, so despiteful, so cruel, did persecute him; yea, in gladly suffering all this from their hands for their salvation; his unshakeable faith in God, and unalterable love toward him, under so fierce a trial, so dreadful a temptation. All these excellent virtues and graces, by the matter being thus ordered, in a degree most eminent, and in a manner very conspicious, were demonstrated to the praise of God's name, and the commendation of his truth; for the settlement of our faith and hope, for an instruction and an encouragement to us of good practice in those highest instances of virtue.

It is a passable notion among the most eminent pagan sages, that no very exemplary virtue can well appear otherwise than in notable misfortune. Whence it is said in Plato, that to approve a man heartily *righteous*, *he must be scourged*, *tortured*, *bound*, *have his two eyes burnt out, and in the close, having suffered all evils*, *must be impaled*, or crucified.* And, *It was* (saith Seneca) *the cup of poison which made Socrates a great man*, and *which out of prison did transfer him to heaven*,† or did procure to him that lofty esteem, affording him opportunity to signalize his constancy, his equanimity, his unconcernedness for this world and life. And, *The virtue*, saith he again, *and the innocence of Rutilius would have lain hid, if it had not* (by condemnation and exile) *received injury; while it was violated, it brightly shone forth.*‡ And he that said this of others, was himself in nothing so illustrious, as in handsomely entertaining that death to which he was by the bloody tyrant adjudged. And generally the most honourable persons in the judgment of posterity for gallant worth, to this very end (as such philosophers teach) were by divine providence delivered up to suffer opprobrious condemnations and punishments, by the ingrateful malignity of their times.[d] So that the Greeks, in consistence with their own wisdom and experience, could not reasonably scorn that cross which our good Lord (did not only, as did their best worthies, by forcible accidental constraint undergo, but) advisedly by free choice did undertake, to recommend the most excellent virtues to imitation, and to promote the most noble designs that could be, by its influence.

So great reason there was that our Lord should thus suffer as a criminal.

II. We may consider, that in that kind his suffering was most bitter and painful. Easily we may imagine what acerbity of pain must be endured by our Lord in his tender limbs being stretched forth, racked, and tentered, and continuing for a good time in such a posture: by the *piercing his hands and his feet*,[e] parts very nervous and exquisitely sensible, with sharp nails (so that, as it is said of Joseph, *the iron entered into his soul*;)[f] by abiding exposed to the injuries of the sun scorching, the wind beating, the weather searching his grievous wounds and sores. Such a pain it was; and that no stupifying, no transient pain, but one both very acute and lingering: for we see, that he together with his fellow-sufferers had both presence of mind and time to discourse. Even six long hours did he remain under such torture, sustaining in each moment of them beyond the pangs of an ordinary

* Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit.—*Sen. de Prov.* c. 3.

Ὁ δίκαιος μαστιγώσεται, στρεβλώσεται, δεδήσεται, ἐκκαυθήσεται τὼ ὀφθαλμώ. τελευτῶν πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀναστκινδυλευθήσεται.—Plat. de Rep 2.

† Cicuta magnum Socratem fecit.—*Sen. Ep.* 13.

Calix venenatus, qui Socratem transtulit e carcere in cœlum.—*Sen. Ep.* 67.

‡ Rutilii innocentia ac virtus lateret, nisi accepisset injuriam; dum violatur, effulsit.—*Sen. Ep.* 79.

Æqualis fuit in tanta inæqualitate fortunæ, &c.—*Sen. Ep.* 104.

[c] John xviii. 37; 1 Tim. vi. 13.

[d] Sen. de Prov. 2, 3, &c.—Plut. de Stoic. Contr. Ep. 1931.

[e] Psal. xxii. 16. [f] Psal. cv. 18.

death.[g] But as the case was so hard and sad, so the reason of it was great, and the fruit answerably good. Our Saviour did embrace such a passion, that, in being thus content to endure the most intolerable smarts for us, he might demonstrate the vehemence of his love; that he might signify the heinousness of our sins, which deserved that from such a person so heavy punishment should be exacted; that he might appear to yield a valuable compensation for those pains which we should have suffered; that he throughly might exemplify the hardest duties of obedience and patience.

III. This manner of suffering was (as most sharp and afflictive, so) most vile and shameful; being proper to the basest condition of the worst men, and unworthy of a freeman, however nocent and guilty.* It was *servile supplicium*, a punishment never by the Romans, under whose law our Lord suffered, legally inflicted upon freemen, but upon slaves only; that is, upon people scarcely regarded as men, having in a sort forfeited or lost themselves. And among the Jews that execution which most approached thereto, and in part agreed with it (for their law did not allow any so inhuman punishment), hanging up the dead bodies of some that had been put to death, was held most infamous and execrable: for, *Cursed* (said the law) *is every one that hangeth upon a tree;* cursed, that is, devoted to repoach and malediction; *Accursed by God*, saith the Hebrew, that is, seeming to be rejected by God, and by his special order exposed to affliction.[h]

Indeed, according to the curse of things, to be set on high, for continuance of time to be objected to the view of all that pass by, in that calamitous posture, doth infuse bad suspicion, doth provoke censure, doth invite contempt and scorn, doth naturally draw forth language of derision, despite, and detestation; especially from the inconsiderate, hard-hearted, and rude vulgar, which commonly doth think, speak, and deal according to event and appearance: (—*Sequitur fortunam semper, et odit damnatos*—) whence θεατρίζεσθαι, *to be made a gazing-stock*,[i] or an object of reproach to the multitude, is by the apostle mentioned as an aggravation of the hardships endured by the primitive Christians. And thus in extremity did it befall our Lord: for we read, that the people did in that condition mock, jeer, and revile him,* drawing up their noses, abusing him by scurrilous gestures, letting out their virulent and wanton tongues against him;[j] so as to verify that prediction, *I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*[k]

The same persons who formerly had admired his glorious works, who had been ravished with his excellent discourses, who had followed and favoured him so earnestly, who had blessed and magnified him, (*for he*, saith St. Luke, *taught in the synagogues, being glorified by all;*[l]) even those very persons did then behold him with pitiless contempt and despite. In correspondence to that prophecy, *they look and stare upon me*, εἰστήκει ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν, *the people stood gazing*[m] on him in a most scornful manner, venting contemptuous and spiteful reproaches; as we see reported in the evangelical story.

Thus did our blessed Saviour *endure the cross, despising the shame.*[n] *Despising the shame;* that is, not simply disregarding it, or (with a stoical haughtiness, with a cynical immodesty, with a stupid carelessness) slighting it as no evil; but not eschewing it, or not rating it for so great an evil, that to decline it he would neglect the prosecution of his great and glorious designs.

There is innate to man an aversation and abhorrency from disgraceful abuse, no less strong than are the like antipathies to pain: whence *cruel mockings and scourgings*[o] are coupled as ingredients of the sore persecutions sustained by God's

* Quod etiam homine libero, quamvis nocente, videatur indignum.—*Lact.* iv. 26.

[g] Mark xv. 25, 34.

[h] Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13.—Τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον τῆς τελευτῆς τὸ εἶδος ὑπὸ ἀρὰν ἔκειτο.—Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 61.

* Ἐξεμυκτήριζον· ἐνέπαιζον· ἐβλασφήμουν.

[i] Heb. x. 33.

[j] Luke xxiii. 35, 36; Matt. xxvii. 39.

[k] Psal. xxii. 6, 7, 8.

[l] Matt. ix. 33; xxi. 9; xii. 23; Luke iv. 15.

[m] Psal. xxii. 17; Luke xxiii. 35.

[n] Heb. xii. 2. [o] Heb. xi. 36.

faithful martyrs. And generally men with more readiness will embrace, with more contentedness will endure, the cruelty of the latter than of the former; pain not so smartly affecting the lower sense, as being insolently contemned doth grate upon the fancy, and wound even the mind itself. For, *the wounds* of infamy *do*, as the Wise Man telleth us, *go down into the innermost parts of the belly*,[p] reaching the very heart, and touching the soul to the quick.

We therefore need not doubt, but that our Saviour, as a man endowed with human passions, was sensible of this natural evil; and that such indignities did add somewhat of loathsomeness to his cup of affliction; especially considering that his great charity disposed him to grieve, observing men to act so indecently, so unworthily, so unjustly toward him: yet in consideration of the glory that would thence accrue to God, of the benefit that would redound to us, of the *joy that was set before him*, when *he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*,[q] he most willingly did accept, and most gladly did comport with it. He *became a curse for us*, exposed to malediction and reviling; he *endured the contradiction*, or obloquy, *of sinful men:* he was *despised, rejected, and disesteemed of men:* he in common apprehension was deserted by God, according to that of the prophet, *We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;* himself even seeming to concur in that opinion. So was he *made a curse for us*, that *we*, as the apostle teacheth, might *be redeemed from the curse of the law;*[r] that is, that we might be freed from the exemplary punishment due to our transgressions of the law, with the displeasure of God appearing therein, and the disgrace before the world attending it. He chose thus to *make himself of no reputation*,[s] vouchsafing to be dealt with as a wretched slave, and a wicked miscreant, that we might be exempted, not only from the torment, but also from the ignominy which we had merited: that together with our life, our safety, our liberty, we might even recover that honour which we had forfeited and embezzled.

But lest any should be tempted not sufficiently to value these sufferances of our Lord, as not so rare but that other men have tasted the like; lest any should presume to compare them with afflictions incident to other persons, as Celsus did compare them with those of Anaxarchus and Epictetus;[t] it is requisite to consider some remarkable particulars about them.

We may then consider, that not only the infinite dignity of his person, and the perfect innocency of his life, did enhance the price of his sufferings; but some endowments peculiar to him, and some circumstances adhering to his design, did much augment their force.

He was not only, according to the frame and temper of human nature, sensibly touched with the pain, the shame, the whole combination of disasters apparently waiting on his passion; as God (when he did insert sense and passion into our nature, ordering objects to affect them) did intend we should be, and as other men in like circumstances would have been; but in many respects beyond that ordinary rate: so that no man, we may suppose, could have felt such grief from them as he did, no man ever hath been sensible of any thing comparable to what he did endure; that passage being truly applicable to him: *Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger;* as that unparalleled *sweating out great lumps of blood* may argue:[u] and as the terms expressing his resentments do intimate. For, in respect of present evils, he said of himself, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful to death;* he is said ἀδημονεῖν, *to be in great anguish* and anxiety, to be in *an agony* or pang of sorrow. In regard to mischiefs which he saw coming on, he is said to be *disturbed in spirit*, and to be *sore amazed*, or dismayed at them.[v] To such an exceeding height did the sense of incumbent evils, and the prospect of impendent calamities, the apprehension of his case,

[p] Prov. xviii. 8; xx. 18.
[q] Heb. xii. 2.
[r] Isa. liii. 11; Gal. iii. 13; Heb. xii. 3; Isa. liii. 3, 4.
[s] Phil. ii. 7.
[t] Orig. c. Cels. vii. p. 368.
[u] Lam. i. 12; Luke xxii. 44.
[v] Matt. xxvi. 37, 38; John xiii. 21; xii. 27; Mark xiv. 33.

together with a reflection on our condition, screw up his affections.

And no wonder that such a burden, even the weight of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) that ever were committed by mankind, by appropriation of them to himself, lying on his shoulders, he should feel it heavy, or seem to crouch and groan under it; that in the mystical Psalm, applied by the apostle to him, he should cry out *Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart faileth me.*[w] The sight of God's indignation, so dreadfully flaming out against sin, might well astonish and terrify him: to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell belching fire and brimstone in his face; to lie down in the hottest furnace of divine vengeance; to quench with his own heart-blood the wrath of Heaven, and the infernal fire (as he did in regard to those who will not rekindle them to themselves), might well in the heart of a man beget unconceivable and unexpressible pressures of affliction. When such a Father (so infinitely good and kind to him, whom he so dearly and perfectly loved) did hide his face from him, did frown on him, how could he otherwise than be mightily troubled? Is it strange that so hearty a love, so tender a pity, contemplating our sinfulness, and experimenting our wretchedness, should be deeply touched? To see, I say, so plainly, to feel so throughly the horrible blindness, the folly, the infidelity, the imbecility, the ingratitude, the incorrigibility, the strange perverseness, perfidiousness, malice, and cruelty of mankind in so many instances (in the treason of Judas, in the denial of Peter, in the desertion of all the apostles, in the spite and rage of the persecutors, in the falsehood of the witnesses, in the abuses of the people, in the compliance of Pilate, in a general conspiracy of friends and foes to sin), all these surrounding him, all invading him, all discharging themselves upon him: would it not astone a mind so pure? would it not wound a heart so tender and full of charity?

[w] Heb. x. 5; Psal. xl. 12.

Surely, any of those persons who fondly do pretend unto, or vainly do glory in, a sullen apathy, or a stubborn contempt of the evils incident to our nature and state, would in such a case have been utterly dejected: the most resolved philosopher would have been dashed into confusion at the sight, would have been crushed into desperation under the sense of those evils which did assault him.

With the greatness of the causes, the goodness of his constitution did conspire to increase his sufferings. For surely, as his complexion was most pure and delicate, his spirit most vivid and apprehensive, his affections most pliant and tractable; so accordingly would the impressions upon him be most sensible, and consequently the pains which he felt (in body or soul) most afflictive.

That we in like cases are not alike moved, that we do not tremble at the apprehensions of God's displeasure, that we are not affrighted with the sense of our sins, that we do not with sad horror resent our danger and our misery, doth arise from that we have very glimmering and faint conceptions of those matters; or that they do not in so clear and lively a manner strike our fancy (not appearing in their true nature and proper shape, so heinous and so hideous as they really are in themselves and in their consequences;) or because we have but weak persuasions about them; or because we do but slightly consider them; or from that our hearts are very hard and callous, our affections very cold and dull, so that nothing of this nature (nothing beside gross material affairs) can mollify or melt them; or for that we have in us small love to God, and a slender regard to our own welfare; in fine, for that in spiritual matters we are neither so wise, so sober, so serious, nor so good or ingenuous, in any reasonable measure, as we should be. But our Saviour, in all those respects, was otherwise disposed. He most evidently discerned the wrath of God, the grievousness of sin, the wretchedness of man, most truly, most fully, most strongly represented to his mind: he most firmly believed, yea most certainly knew, whatever God's law had declared about them: he did exactly consider and weigh them: his heart was most soft and sensible, his affections were

most quick and excitable by their due objects: he was full of dutiful love to God, and most ardently desirous of our good, bearing a more than fraternal good-will toward us. Whence it is not so marvellous that as a man, as a transcendently wise and good man, he was so vehemently affected by those occurrences, that his imagination was so troubled, and his passions so stirred by them; so that he thence did suffer in a manner and to a degree unconceivable, according to that ejaculation in the Greek liturgies: *Διὰ τῶν ἀγνώστων σου παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Χριστὲ, By thy unknown sufferings, O Christ, have mercy on us.* But further,

IV. We may consider, that this way of suffering had in it some particular advantages, conducing to the accomplishment of our Lord's principal designs.

Its being very notorious, and lasting a competent time, were good advantages. For if he had been privately made away, or suddenly despatched, no such great notice would have been taken of it, nor would the matter of fact have been so fully proved, to the confirmation of our faith, and conviction of infidelity; nor had that his excellent deportment under such bitter affliction (his most divine patience, meekness, and charity) so illustriously shone forth. Wherefore, to prevent all exceptions, and excuses of unbelief (together with other collateral good purposes), divine Providence did so manage the business, that as the course of his life, so also the manner of his death, should be most conspicuously remarkable. *I spake freely to the world, and in secret have I done nothing*, said he of himself; and, *These things* (said St. Paul to king Agrippa) *were not done in a corner.*[x] Such were the proceedings of his life, not close or clancular, but frank and open; not presently hushed up, but leisurely carried on in the face of the world, that men might have the advantage to observe and examine them. And as he lived, so he died, most publicly and visibly; the world being witness of his death, and so prepared to believe his resurrection, and thence disposed to embrace his doctrine; according to what he did foretel: *I, being lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to me:*[y] for he drew all men, by so obvious a death, to take notice of it; he drew all well-disposed persons, from the wondrous consequences of it, to believe on him. And, *As* (said he again) *Moses did exalt the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be exalted.*[z] As the elevation of that mysterious serpent did render it visible, and did attract the eyes of people toward it;[a] whereby, God's power invisibly accompanying that sacramental performance, they were cured of those mortiferous stings which they had received: so our Lord, being mounted on the cross, allured the eyes of men to behold him, and their hearts to close with him; whereby, the heavenly virtue of God's spirit co-operating, they became saved from those destructive sins, which from the Devil's serpentine instigations they had incurred.

Another advantage of this kind of suffering was, that by it the nature of that kingdom, which he did intend to erect, was evidently signified: that it was not such as the carnal people did expect, an external, earthly, temporal kingdom, consisting in domination over the bodies and estates of men, dignified by outward wealth and splendour, managed by worldly power and policy, promoted by forcible compulsion and terror of arms, affording the advantages of safety, quiet, and prosperity here; but a kingdom purely spiritual, celestial, eternal; consisting in the governance of men's hearts and minds; adorned with the endowments of wisdom and virtue; administered by the conduct and grace of God's Holy Spirit; upheld and propagated by meek instruction, by virtuous example, by hearty devotion, and humble patience; rewarding its loyal subjects with spiritual joys and consolations now, with heavenly rest and bliss hereafter. No other kingdom could he presume to design, who submitted to this dolorous and disgraceful way of suffering; no other exploits could he pretend to achieve by expiring on a cross; no other way could he rule, who gave himself to be managed by the will of his adversaries; no other benefits would this forlorn case allow him to dispense. So that well might

[x] John xviii. 20; Acts xxvi. 26.

[y] John xii. 32; (Iren ii. 26.)

[z] John iii. 14.

[a] Iren. iv. 5.

he then assert, *My kingdom is not of this world*;[b] when he was going in this signal way to demonstrate that important truth.

It was also a most convenient touchstone to prove the genuine disposition and worth of men;[c] so as to discriminate those wise, sober, ingenuous, sincere, generous souls, who could discern true goodness through so dark a cloud, who could love it though so ill-favouredly disfigured, who could embrace and avow it notwithstanding so terrible disadvantages; it served, I say, to distinguish those *blessed* ones, who *would not be offended in him*, or by *the scandal of the cross* be discouraged from adhering to him, from the crew of blind, vain, perverse, haughty people, who, being scandalized at his adversity, would contemn and reject him.[d]

Another considerable advantage was this, that by it God's special providence was discovered, and his glory illustrated in the propagation of the gospel.[e] For how could it be, that a person of so low parentage, of so mean garb, of so poor condition, who underwent so lamentable and despicable a kind of death, falling under the pride and spite of his enemies, so easily should gain so general an opinion in the world (even among the best, the wisest, the greatest persons) of being *the Lord of life and glory*?[f] How, I say, could it happen, that such a miracle could be effected without God's aid and special concurrence? That king Herod, who from a long reign in flourishing state, with prosperous success in his enterprises, did attain the name of Great; or that Vespasian, who triumphantly did ascend the imperial throne, should either of them, by a few admirers of worldly vanity, seriously be held, or in flattery be called the Messias, is not so strange: but that one who was trampled on so miserably, and treated as a wretched caitiff, should instantly conquer innumerable hearts, and, from such a depth of extreme adversity, should be advanced to the sublimest pitch of glory; that *the stone which the builders* with so much scorn *did refuse*, should *become the head-stone of the corner; this* (with good assurance we may say) *was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*[g]

Hereby indeed *the excellency of divine power*[h] and wisdom was much glorified; by so impotent, so improbable, so implausible means accomplishing so great effects; subduing the world to obedience of God, not by the active valour of an illustrious hero, but through the patient submission of a poor, abused, and oppressed person; restoring mankind to life and happiness by the sorrowful death of a crucified Saviour.

V. Lastly, the consideration of our Lord's suffering in this manner is very useful in application to our practice: no point is more fruitful of wholesome instruction, none is more forcible to kindle devout affections, none can afford more efficacious inducements and incentives to a pious life. For what virtue will not a serious meditation on the cross be apt to breed and to cherish? To what duty will it not engage and excite us?

1. Are we not hence infinitely obliged, with most humble affection and hearty gratitude, to adore each Person of the blessed Trinity?

That God the Father should design such a redemption for us; *not sparing his own Son*, (*the Son of his love*, dear to him as himself), but *delivering him up for us*,[i] to be thus dealt with for our sake: that God would endure to see his Son in so pitiful a condition, to hear him groaning under so grievous pressures, to let him be so horribly abused; and that for us, who deserved nothing from him, who had demerited so much against him: for us, who were no friends to him (for *even when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;*) who were not any ways commendable for goodness or righteousness (for *Christ did suffer for sinners, the just for the unjust;* and *God commended his love to us, that while we were sinful, Christ died for us:*) that God thus should *love us, sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins*,[j] in so dismal a way of suf-

[b] John xviii. 36. [c] Luke ii. 35.
[d] Matt. xi. 6; Gal. v. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8; 1 Cor. i. 23. [e] Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. 61.
[f] 1 Cor. ii. 8; James ii. 1.
[g] Psal. cxviii. 22, 23.
[h] 2 Cor. iv. 7; 1 Cor. i. 27.
[i] Rom. viii. 32; Col. i. 13.
[j] Rom. v. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. v. 6; 2 Cor. v. 19; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10.

fering, how stupendous is that goodness! how vast an obligation doth it lay upon us to reciprocal affection! If we do owe all to God, as our Maker, from whose undeserved bounty we did receive all that we have; how much further do we stand indebted to him as the Author of our redemption, from whose ill-deserved mercy we receive a new being, and better state; and that in a way far more obliging! For God created us with a word, without more cost or trouble: but to redeem us stood him in huge expenses and pains; no less than the debasing of his only Son to our frailty, the exposing him to more than our misery, the withdrawing his face and restraining his bowels from his best beloved. If a Jew, then, were commanded by law, if a Gentile were obliged by nature, to *love God with all his heart and all his soul;* what affection doth a Christian, under the law and duty of grace, owe unto him? By what computation can we reckon that debt? What faculties have we sufficient to discharge it? What finite heart can hold an affection commensurate to such an obligation?

And how can it otherwise than inflame our heart with love toward the blessed Son of God, our Saviour, to consider that, merely out of charitable pity toward us, he purposely came down from heaven, and took our flesh upon him, that he might therein undergo those extreme acerbities of pain and those most ugly indignities of shame for us?[k] *Greater love* (said he) *hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*[l] But that God should lay down his life, should pour forth his blood, should be aspersed with the worst crimes, and clothed with the foulest shame, should be executed on a cross as a malefactor and a slave, for his enemies and rebellious traitors, what imagination can devise any expression of charity or friendship comparable to this? Wherefore, if love naturally be productive of love, if friendship justly meriteth a correspondence in good-will, what effect should the consideration of so ineffable a love, of so unparalleled friendship, have upon us?

How can any serious reflection on this event fail to work hearty gratitude in us toward our good Lord? For put case any person for our sake (that he might rescue us from the greatest mischiefs, and purchase for us the highest benefits) willingly should deprive himself of all his estate (and that a very large one), of his honour (and that a very high one), of his ease and pleasure (and those the most perfect and assured that could be;) that he should expose himself to the greatest hazards, should endure the sorest pains and most disgraceful ignominies; should prostitute his life, and in most hideous manner lose it, merely for our sake: should we not then apprehend and confess ourselves monstrously ingrateful, if we did not most deeply resent such kindness; if upon all occasions we did not express our thankfulness for it; if we did not ever readily yield all the acknowledgment and all the requital we were able? The case in regard to our blessed Saviour is like in kind: but in degree, whatever we can suppose doth infinitely fall below the performances of him for us, who stooped from the top of heaven, who laid aside the majesty and the felicity of God, for the infamies and the dolours of a cross, that he might redeem us from the torments of hell, and instate us in the joys of paradise. So that our obligations of gratitude to him are unexpressibly great; and we cannot with any face deny ourselves to be most basely unworthy, if the effects in our heart and life be not answerable.

Nor should we forget, that also upon this account we do owe great love and thanks to God the Holy Ghost, who, as he did originally conspire in the wonderful project of our redemption, as he did executively by miraculous operation conduct our Saviour into his fleshly tabernacle, as he did by unmeasurable communications of divine virtue assist his humanity through all the course of his life;[m] so in this juncture he did inspire in him with charity more than human, and did support him to undergo those pressures with invincible patience; and so did sanctify all this sacerdotal performance, that our Lord (as the apostle doth affirm) *did through the eternal Spirit offer himself without spot to God.*[n]

[k] Eph. iii. 19; v. 2, 25; Gal. ii. 20; Apoc. i. 5.

[l] John xv. 13,—οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις——

[m] John iii. 34.

[n] Heb. ix. 14.

2. What surer ground can there be of faith in God, what stronger encouragement of hope, than is suggested by this consideration? For if God steadfastly did hold his purpose, and faithfully did accomplish his word in an instance so distasteful to his own heart and bowels;[o] how can we ever suspect his constancy and fidelity in any case? how can we distrust the completion of any divine promise?

If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us,[p] to the sufferings of so contumelious affliction; how can we any ways be diffident of his bounty, or despair of his mercy? *How* (as the apostle doth argue) *shall he not also with him freely give us all things?*

If ever we be tempted to doubt of God's goodness, will not this experiment thereof convince and satisfy us? For what higher kindness could God express, what lower condescension could he vouchsafe, by what pledge could he more clearly or surely testify his willingness and his delight to do us good, than by thus ordering his dearest Son to undergo such miseries for us?

If the greatness of our sins discourageth us from entertaining comfortable hopes of mercy, will it not rear our hearts, to consider that such a punishment hath been inflicted to expiate them, which might content the most rigorous severity;* that such a price is laid down to *redeem us from the curse*, which richly may suffice to discharge it:[q] that such a sacrifice hath been offered, which God hath avowed for most available and acceptable to himself? So that now what can justice exact more from us?—what have we further to do, than with a penitent and thankful heart to embrace the mercy purchased for us? *Who is he that condemneth*, seeing *Christ hath died*, and *hath his own self borne our sins in his own body on the tree?*[r] Whatever the wounds of our conscience be, is not *the blood of the cross*, tempered with our hearty repentance, and applied by a lively faith, a sovereign balsam, of virtue sufficient to cure them? And may we not *by his stripes be healed?* Have we not abundant reason, with the holy apostle, to *joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have received the atonement?*[s] Is it not to deprecate the worth, to disparage the efficacy of our Lord's passion, any ways to despair of mercy, or to be disconsolate for guilt; as if the cross were not enough worthy to compensate for our unworthiness, or our Saviour's patience could not balance our disobedience?

3. It indeed may yield great joy and sprightly consolation to us, to contemplate our Lord upon the cross, exercising his immense charity toward us, transacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies, and evacuating all the obstacles of our salvation.

May we not delectably consider him as there stretching forth his arms of kindness,* with them to embrace the world, and to receive all mankind under the wings of his protection? as there spreading out his hands, with them earnestly inviting and entreating us to accept the overtures of grace, procured by him for us?

Is it not sweet and satisfactory to view our great High Priest on that high altar offering up his own pure flesh, and pouring out his precious blood, as an universal complete sacrifice, propitiatory for the sins of mankind?[t]

Is it not a goodly object to behold humility and patience so gloriously rearing themselves above all worldly, all infernal pride and insolence; by the cross ascending unto the celestial throne of dignity and majesty superlative?

Is it not pleasant to contemplate our Lord there standing erect, not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a noble conqueror, where *having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a solemn show, triumphing over them?*[u] Did ever any conqueror, loftily seated in his triumphal chariot, yield a spectacle so gallant and magnificent? Was ever tree adorned with trophies so pompous and splendid?

* Quis de se desperet, pro quo tam humilis esse voluit Filius Dei?—*Aug. de Ag. Chr.* c. 11.

[o] 1 Pet. i. 20; Eph. i. 4; Luke i. 70.

[p] Rom. viii. 32.

[q] Gal. iii. 13; Eph. v. 2; 1 Pet. i. 19.

[r] Rom. viii. 34; 1 Pet. ii. 24.

* Extendit in passione manus suas, &c.—*Lact.* iv. 26; Isa. lxv. 2.

[s] 1 Pet. ii. 24; Rom. v. 11.

[t] Lev. ix. 22; Chrys. tom. Or. 82; Pope Leo I.

[u] Col. ii. 15.

To the exterior view and carnal sense of men, our Lord was then indeed exposed to scorn and shame; but to spiritual and sincere discerning, all his and our enemies did there hang up as objects of contempt, utterly overthrown and undone.

There the Devil, that *strong*[v] and sturdy *one*, did hang up bound in chains, disarmed and rifled, quite baffled and confounded, mankind being rescued from his tyrannic power.[w]

There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its bewitching pleasures, its fondly admired excellencies, did hang up, all defaced and disparaged; as it appeared to St. Paul: for *God* (saith he) *forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.*[x]

There, in a most lively representation, and most admirable pattern, was exhibited *the mortification of our flesh, with its affections and lusts;* and our *old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed.*[y]

There our sins, being (as St. Peter telleth us) *carried up by him unto the gibbet*, did hang as marks of his victorious prowess, as malefactors by him *condemned in the flesh*, as objects of our horror and hatred.[z]

There death itself hung gasping, with its sting pulled out, and all it terrors quelled; his death having prevented ours, and induced immortality.[a]

There all wrath, *enmity*, strife (the banes of comfortable life), did hang *abolished in his flesh*, and *slain upon the cross, by the blood whereof he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth.*[b]

There manifold yokes of bondage, instruments of vexation, and principles of variance, even all *the handwriting of ordinances that was against us*, did hang up, cancelled, *and nailed to the cross.*[c]

So much sweet comfort by special consideration may be extracted from this event, which in appearance was most doleful, but in effect the most happy that ever by Providence was dispensed to the world. Further,

4. This consideration is most useful to render us very humble and sensible of our weakness, our vileness, our wretchedness. For how low was that our fall, from which we could not be raised without such a depression of God's only Son! How great is that impotency, which did need such a succour to relieve it! How abominable must be that iniquity, which might not be expiated without so costly a sacrifice! How deplorable is that misery, which could not be removed without commutation of so strange a suffering! Would the Son of God have so *emptied*[d] and abased himself for nothing? Would he have endured such pains and ignominies for a trifle? No, surely: if our guilt had been slight, if our case had been tolerable, the divine wisdom would have chosen a more cheap and easy remedy for us.

Is it not madness for us to be conceited of any worth in ourselves, to confide in any merit of our works, to glory in any thing belonging to us, to fancy ourselves brave, fine, happy persons, worthy of great respect and esteem; whenas our unworthiness, our demerit, our forlorn estate, did extort from the most gracious God a displeasure needing such a reconciliation, did impose upon the most glorious Son of God a necessity to undergo such a punishment in our behalf?

How can we reasonably pretend to any honour, or justly assume any regard to ourselves, whenas the firstborn of heaven, *the Lord of glory*, partaker of divine majesty, was fain to *make himself of no reputation*, to put himself into *the garb of a servant*,[e] and, under the imputation of a malefactor, to bear such disgrace and infamy in our room, in lieu of the confusion due to us?

What more palpable confutation can there be of human vanity and arrogance, of all lofty *imaginations*,[f] all presumptuous confidences, all turgid humours, all fond self-pleasings and self-admirings, than is that tragical cross, wherein, as in a glass, our foul deformity, our pitiful meanness, our helpless infirmity, our sad wofulness, are so plainly represented.

[v] Ὁ ἰσχυρός.—Matt. xii. 29.
[w] Luke xi. 21, 22; Heb. ii. 14.
[x] Gal. vi. 14.
[y] Gal. ii. 20; v. 24; Col. iii. 5; Rom. viii. 13.
[z] 1 Pet. ii. 24; Rom. viii. 3.
[a] 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55; 2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14.
[b] Eph. ii. 15, 16; Col. i. 20. [c] Col. ii. 14.
[d] Ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε.—Phil. ii. 7.
[e] 1 Cor. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 7. [f] 2 Cor. x. 5.

Well surely may we say with St. Austin, *Let man now at length blush to be proud, for whom God is made so humble.* [And since, as he doth add,* *this great disease of soul did bring down the almighty Physician from heaven, did humble him to the form of a servant, did subject him to contumelies, did suspend him on a cross, that this tumour by virtue of so great a medicine might be cured:*] may not he well be presumed incurable, who is not cured of his pride by this medicine; in whom neither the reason of the case, nor the force of such an example, can work humility?

5. But further, while this contemplation doth breed sober humility, it also should preserve us from base abjectness of mind; for it doth evidently demonstrate, that, according to God's infallible judgment, we are very considerable; that our souls are capable of high regard; that it is a great pity we should be lost and abandoned to ruin. For surely, had not God much esteemed and respected us, he would not for our sakes have so debased himself, or deigned to endure so much for our recovery; divine justice would not have exacted or accepted such a ransom for our souls, had they been of little worth. We should not therefore slight ourselves, nor demean ourselves like sorry contemptible wretches, as if we deserved no consideration, no pity from ourselves; as if we thought our souls not worth saving, which yet our Lord thought good to purchase at so dear a rate.[g]† By so despising or disregarding ourselves, do we not condemn the sentiments, do we not vilify the sufferings of our Lord; so with a pitiful meanness of spirit joining the most unworthy injustice and ingratitude? Again,

6. How can we reflect upon this event without extreme displeasure against, and hearty detestation of our sins? those sins which indeed did bring such tortures and such disgraces upon our blessed Redeemer? Judas, the wretch who betrayed him; the Jewish priests who did accuse and prosecute him; the wicked rout which did abusively insult over him; those cruel hands that smote him; those pitiless hearts that scorned him; those poisonous tongues that mocked him and reviled him; all those who were the instruments and abettors of his affliction, how do we loathe and abhor them! how do we detest their names and execrate their memories! But how much greater reason have we to abominate our sins, which were the true, the principal actors of all that woful tragedy! *He was delivered for our offences:* they were indeed the traitors, which by the hands of Judas delivered him up. *He that knew no sin, was made sin for us;*[h] that is, was accused, was condemned, was executed as a sinner for us. It was therefore we, who by our sins did impeach him; the spiteful priests were but our advocates: we by them did adjudge and sentence him; Pilate was but drawn in against his will and conscience to be our spokesman in that behalf: we by them did inflict that horrid punishment on him; the Roman executioners were but our representatives therein. *He became a curse for us;*[i] that is, all the mockery, derision, and contumely he endured, did proceed from us; the silly people were but properties acting our parts. Our sins were they that cried out, *Crucifige!* (*Crucify him, crucify him*), with clamours more loud and more importunate than did all the Jewish rabble; it was they, which by the borrowed throats of that base people did so outrageously persecute him. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities:*[j] it was they, which by the hands of the fierce soldiers, and of the rude populace, as by senseless engines, did buffet and scourge him; they by the nails and thorns did pierce his flesh, and rend his sacred body. Upon them, therefore, it is most just and fit that we should

* Jam tandem erubescat homo esse superbus, propter quem factus est humilis Deus.—*Aug. in Ps.* xviii.

Iste ingens morbus omnipotentem Medicum de cœlo deduxit, usque ad formam servi humiliavit, contumeliis egit, ligno suspendit, ut per salutem tantæ medi cinæ curetur hic tumor.—*Ibid.*

Quæ superbia sanari potest, si humilitate Filii Dei non sanatur?—*Aug. de Agone Chr.* cap. xi.

† Aut vero pro minimo habet Deus hominem, propter quem mori voluit Filium suum?—*Aug. in Psal* cxlviii.

Si vobis ex terrena fragilitate viles estis, ex pretio vestro vos æstimate.—*Aug.*

[g] Acts xiii. 46.

[h] Rom. iv. 25; 2 Cor. v. 21.

[i] Gal. iii. 13.

[j] Isa. liii. 5.

turn our hatred, that we should discharge our indignation.

7. And what in reason can be more powerful toward working penitential sorrow and remorse, than reflection upon such horrible effects, proceeding from our sins? How can we forbear earnestly to grieve, considering ourselves by them to have been the perfidious betrayers, the unjust slanderers, the cruel persecutors and barbarous murderers of a person so innocent and lovely, so good and benign, so great and glorious; of God's own dear son, of our best friend, of our most gracious Redeemer?

8. If ingenuity will not operate so far, and hereby melt us into contrition; yet surely this consideration must needs affect us with a religious fear. For can we otherwise than tremble to think upon the heinous guilt of our sins, upon the dreadful fierceness of God's wrath against them, upon the impartial severity of divine judgment for them, all so manifestly discovered, all so livelily set forth in this dismal spectacle?[k] If the view of an ordinary execution is apt to beget in us some terror, some dread of the law, some reverence toward authority; what awful impressions should this singular example of divine justice work upon us?

How greatly we should be moved thereby, what affections it should raise in us, we may even learn from the most inanimate creatures: for the whole world did seem affected thereat with horror and confusion; the frame of things was discomposed and disturbed; all nature did feel a kind of compassion and compunction for it. The sun (as from aversion and shame) did hide his face, leaving the world covered for three hours with mournful blackness; the bowels of the earth did yearn and quake; the rocks did split; the veil of the temple was rent: the graves did open themselves, and the dead bodies were roused up. And can we, then, (who are the most concerned in the event) be more stupid than the earth, more obdurate than rocks, more drowsy than interred carcasses, the most insensible and immoveable things in nature? But further,

9. How can the meditation on this event do otherwise than hugely deter us from all wilful disobedience and commission of sin? For how thereby can we violate such engagements, and thwart such an example of obedience? How thereby can we abuse so wonderful goodness, and disoblige so transcendent charity? How thereby can we reject that gentle dominion over us, which our Redeemer did so dearly purchase, or renounce *the Lord that bought us* at so high a rate?[l] With what heart can we bring upon the stage, and act over that direful tragedy, renewing all that pain and all that disgrace to our Saviour: as the apostle teacheth that we do by apostacy, *crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame*?[m] Can we without horror *tread under foot the son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*;[n] (as the same divine apostle saith all wilful transgressors do;[o]) vilifying that most sacred and precious blood, so freely shed for the demonstration of God's mercy, and ratification of his gracious intentions toward us, as a thing of no special worth or consideration; despising all his so kind and painful endeavours for our salvation; defeating his most charitable purposes and earnest desires for our welfare; rendering all his so bitter and loathsome sufferings in regard to us utterly vain and fruitless, yea indeed very hurtful and pernicious? For if the cross do not save us from our sins, it will much aggravate their guilt, and augment their punishment; bringing a severer condemnation and a sadder ruin on us. Again,

10. This consideration affordeth very strong engagements to the practice of charity towards our neighbour. For what heart can be so hard, that the blood of the cross cannot mollify into a charitable and compassionate sense? Can we forbear to love those, toward whom our Saviour did bear so tender affection, for whom he was pleased to sustain so woful tortures and indignities? Shall we not, in obedience to his most urgent commands, in conformity to his most notable example, in grateful return to him for his

[k] Psal. cxix. 120.

[l] Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Rom. xiv. 9; 2 Cor. v. 15; 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 20.

[m] Heb. vi. 6,—ἀνασταυροῦντες.

[n] Heb. x. 29,—κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος.

[o] Heb. x. 26.—Ἑκουσίως ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν.

benefits, who thus did gladly suffer for us, discharge this most sweet and easy duty towards his beloved friends? Shall we not be willing, by parting with a little superfluous stuff for the relief of our poor brother, to requite and gratify him, who, to succour us in our distress, most bountifully did part with his wealth, with his glory, with his pleasure, with his life itself?[p] Shall we not meekly comport with an infirmity, not bear a petty neglect, not forgive a small injury to our brother, whenas our Lord did for us and from us bear a cross, to procure remission for our innumerable most heinous affronts and offences against Almighty God? Can a heart, void of mercy and pity, with any reason or modesty pretend to the mercies and compassions of the cross? Can we hope that God for Christ's sake will pardon us, if we for Christ's sake will not forgive our neighbour?

Can we hear our Lord saying to us, *This is my command, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;* and, *Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another?* Can we hear St. Paul exhorting, *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;* and, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.—For even Christ pleased not himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me?* Can we attend to St. John's arguing, *Beloved, if God so loved us, then ought we also to love one another. Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: wherefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren?*[q]

Can we, I say, consider such precepts, and such discourses, without effectually being disposed to comply with them for the sake of our crucified Saviour, all whose life was nothing else but one continual recommendation and enforcement of this duty? but his death especially was a pattern most obliging, most incentive thereto. This use of the point is the more to be regarded, because the apostle doth apply it hereto, our text coming in upon that occasion; for having pathetically exhorted the Philippians to all kinds of charity and humble condescension, he subjoineth, *Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God,*[r] &c.

11. But furthermore, what can be more operative than this point toward breeding a disregard of this world, with all its deceitful vanities and mischievous delights; toward reconciling our minds to the worst condition into which it can bring us; toward supporting our hearts under the heaviest pressures of affliction which it can lay upon us? For can we reasonably expect, can we eagerly affect, can we ardently desire great prosperity, whenas the Son of God, our Lord and Master, did only taste such adversity? How can we refuse, in submission to God's pleasure, contentedly to bear a slight grievance, whenas our Saviour gladly did bear a cross, infinitely more distasteful to carnal will and sense than any that can befall us? Who now can admire those splendid trifles, which our Lord never did regard in his life, and which at his death only did serve to mock and abuse him? Who can relish those sordid pleasures, of which he living did not vouchsafe to taste, and the contraries whereof he dying choose to feel in all extremity? Who can disdain or despise a state of sorrow and disgrace, which he, by voluntary susception of it, hath so dignified and graced; by which we so near resemble and become conformable to him; by which we concur and partake with him; yea, by which in some cases we may promote, and after a sort complete his designs, *filling up* (as St. Paul speaketh) *that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh?*[s]

Who now can hugely prefer being esteemed, approved, favoured, commended by men, before infamy, reproach, derision, and persecution from them; especially when these do follow conscientious adherence to righteousness? Who can be very ambitious of worldly honour and repute, covetous of wealth, or greedy of pleasure, who doth observe the Son of God choosing rather to hang upon a cross, than to sit upon a throne; inviting the clamours of scorn and spite, rather than

[p] 2 Cor. viii. 9; Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13.
[q] John xv. 12; xiii. 35; Eph. v. 2; Rom. xv. 1, 3; 1 John iv. 11; iii. 16.
[r] Phil. ii. 5, 6.
[s] Rom. viii. 17; Phil. iii. 10; Apoc. i. 9; 1 Pet. iv. 13; Col. i. 24.

acclammations of blessing and praise; divesting himself of secular power, pomp, plenty conveniences, and solaces; embracing the garb of a slave, and the repute of a malefactor, before the dignity and respect of a prince, which were his due, which he most easily could have obtained?*

Can we imagine it a very happy thing to be high and prosperous in this world, to swim in affluence and pleasure?—can we take it for a misery to be mean and low, to conflict with some wants and straits here; seeing the Fountain of all happiness did himself purposely condescend to so forlorn a state, and was pleased to become so deep a sufferer?† If with devout eyes of our mind we do behold our Lord hanging naked upon a gibbet, besmeared all over with streams of his own blood, groaning under smart anguish of pain, encompassed with all sorts of disgraceful abuses, *yielding* (as it was foretold of him) *his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair, hiding not his face from shame and spitting*;[t] will not the imagination of such a spectacle dim the lustre of all earthly grandeurs and beauties, damp the sense of all carnal delights and satisfactions, quash all that extravagant glee which we can find in any wild frolics or riotous merriments? will it not stain all our pride, and check our wantonness? will it not dispose our minds to be sober, placing our happiness in things of another nature, seeking our content in matters of higher importance; preferring obedience to the will of God, before compliance with the fancies and desires of men?—according to that precept of St. Peter, *Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind—so as no longer to live the remaining time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*[u]

12. This indeed will instruct and incline us cheerfully to submit unto God's will, and gladly to accept from his hand whatever he disposeth, however grievious and afflictive to our natural will; this point suggesting great commendation of afflictions, and strong consolation under them. For if such hardship was to our Lord himself a school of duty, *he* (as the apostle saith) *learning obedience from what he suffered*;[v] if it was to him a fit mean of perfection, as the apostle doth again imply when he saith, *that it became God to perfect the Captain of our salvation by suffering*;[w] if it was an attractive of the divine favour even to him, as those words import, *Therefore the Father loveth me, because I lay down my life*;[x] if it was to him a step toward glory, according to that saying, *Was not Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory?*[y] yea, if it was a ground of conferring on him a sublime pitch of dignity above all creatures, *God for this obedience having exalted him, and given him a name above all names; We seeing Jesus—for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour*;[z] the heavenly society in the Revelations with one voice crying out, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain (who redeemed us to God by his blood) to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing:*[a] if affliction did minister such advantages to him; and if by our conformity to him in undergoing it (with like equanimity, humility, and patience) it may afford the like to us; what reason is there that we should anywise be discomposed at it, or disconsolate under it? Much greater reason, surely, there is, that with St. Paul and all the holy apostles, we should rejoice, boast, and exult, in our tribulations:[b] far more cause we have, with them, to esteem it a favour, a privilege, an ornament, a felicity to us, than to be displeased and discontented therewith.

To do thus, is a duty incumbent on us as Christians. For, *He* (saith our Master) *that doth not take up his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me: He that doth not carry his cross, and go after*

* Cogitemus crucem ejus, et divitias lutum esse putabimus.—*Hier. ad Nepot.* Epist. 2.

† Quis beatam vitam esse arbitretur in iis, quæ contemnenda esse docuit Filius Dei?—*Aug. de Ag. Chr.* cap. xi.

[t] Isa. l. 6. [u] 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.

[v] ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε,—Heb. v. 8.
[w] Heb. ii. 10. [x] John x. 17.
[y] Luke xxiv. 26. [z] Phil. ii. 9; Heb. ii. 9.
[a] Rev. v. 12, 9.
[b] (Rom. v. 3; Col. i. 24; Matt. v. 12; Luke vi. 23; Phil. i. 29; Acts v. 41; James i. 2; Heb. x. 34; 1 Pet. i. 7; Heb. xii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 4;) 1 Thess. iii. 3; Rom. viii. 29; Acts xiv. 22; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

me, cannot be my disciple.[c] He that doth not willingly take the cross, when it is presented to him by God's hand; he that doth not contentedly bear it, when it is by providence imposed on him, is nowise worthy of the honour to wait on Christ; he is not capable to be reckoned among the disciples of our heavenly Master. He is *not worthy of Christ*, as not having the courage, the constancy, the sincerity of a Christian; or of one pretending to such great benefits, such high privileges, such excellent rewards, as Christ our Lord and Saviour doth purpose. He *cannot be Christ's disciple*, showing such an incapacity to learn those needful lessons of humility and patience dictated by him; declaring such an indisposition to transcribe those copies of submission to the divine will, self-denial, and self-resignation, so fairly set him by the instruction and example of Christ: for, *Christ* (saith St. Peter) *suffered for us, leaving us an example,*[d] *that we should follow his steps.*

13. The willing susception and the cheerful sustenance of the cross, is indeed the express condition, and the peculiar character of our Christianity; in signification whereof, it hath been from most ancient times a constant usage to mark those who enter into it with the figure of it. The cross, as the instrument by which our peace with God was wrought, as the stage whereon our Lord did act the last part of his marvellous obedience, consummating our redemption, as the field wherein the Captain of our salvation did achieve his noble victories, and erect his glorious trophies over all the enemies thereof, was well assumed to be the badge of our profession, the ensign of our spiritual warfare, the pledge of our constant adherence to our crucified Saviour;[e] in relation to whom our chief hope is grounded, our great joy and sole glory doth consist; for, *God forbid* (saith St. Paul) *that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.*[f]

14. Let it be *to the Jews a scandal*[g] (or offensive to their fancy, prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity;) let it be *folly to the Greeks* (or seem absurd to men puffed up and corrupted in mind with fleshly notions and maxims of worldly craft, disposing them to value nothing which is not grateful to present sense or fancy), that God should put his own most beloved Son into so very sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, glory, and happiness should issue from these fountains of sorrow and shame;[h] that a person in external semblance devoted to so opprobrious usage, should be the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and Judge of all the world: let, I say, this doctrine be scandalous and distasteful to some persons tainted with prejudice; let it be strange and incredible to others blinded with self-conceit; let all the inconsiderate, all the proud, all the profane part of mankind openly with their mouth, or closely in heart, slight and reject it: yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous; to us it is πιστὸς λόγος, *a faithful* and most credible *proposition worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,*[i] in this way of suffering for them: to us, who discern by a clearer light, and are endowed with a purer sense, kindled by the divine Spirit; from whence we may with comfortable satisfaction of mind apprehend and taste, that God could not in a higher measure, or fitter manner, illustrate his glorious attributes of goodness and justice, his infinite grace and mercy toward his poor creatures, his holy displeasure against wickedness, his impartial severity in punishing iniquity and impiety, or in vindicating his own sacred honour and authority, than by thus ordering his only son, clothed with our nature, to suffer for us; that also true virtue and goodness could not otherwise be taught, be exemplified, be commended and impressed, with greater advantage.

Since thereby, indeed, a charity and humanity so unparalleled (far transcending theirs who have been celebrated for devoting their lives out of love to their

[c] Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24; Luke xiv. 27; ix. 23; Greg. Naz. Orat. 38, p. 623.
[d] ὑπογραμμὸν ἑπολιμπάνων,—1 Pet. ii. 21.
[e] τὸ τρόπαιον τοῦ σταυροῦ,—Const. Apost. viii. 12.
[f] Gal. vi, 14.
[g] 1 Cor. i. 23.
[h] Orig. in Cels. ii. p. 79.
[i] 1 Tim. i. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 11.

country, or kindness to their friends), a meekness so incomparable, a resolution so invincible, a patience so heroical, were manifested for the instruction and direction of men; since never were the vices and the vanities of the world (so prejudicial to the welfare of mankind) so remarkably discountenanced;[j] since never any suffering could pretend to so worthy and beneficial effects, the expiation of the whole world's sins, and reconciliation of mankind to God, the which no other performance, no other sacrifice, did ever aim to procure; since, in fine, no virtue had ever so glorious rewards, as sovereign dignity to him that exercised it, and eternal happiness to those that imitate it; since, I say, there be such excellent uses and fruits of the cross borne by our Saviour; we can have no reason to be offended at it, or ashamed of it; but with all reason heartily should approve and humbly adore the deep wisdom of God, together with all other his glorious attributes displayed therein. To whom, therefore, as is most due, let us devoutly render all glory and praise. And,

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.[k]

SERMON XXXIII.

OF DOING ALL IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

COLOSS. iii. 17.—*And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Whatsoever ye do in word, or deed: A duty, we see, the apostle enjoins us of a large extent, and therefore surely of a great importance; indeed of an universal concernment; such as must go along with, must run through all our words and all our actions. We are therefore much obliged, and much concerned to attend thereto, and to practise it carefully. But first we must understand what it is; the doing whereof depends upon understanding the sense of that phrase (*doing in the name of Jesus*), being somewhat ambiguous, and capable of divers meanings; which both in common use and in holy Scripture we find it to bear, different according to the variety of matters or occasions to which it is applied; most of which are comprehended, and, as it were, complicated in that general one, according to which we may be said to do that in another person's name, which we do with any kind of reference or regard to him; such as our relations or our obligations to that person do require, and the particular nature of the action doth admit. And according to this acceptation I conceive it safest and best to interpret St. Paul's meaning here, supposing it to comprehend all the more special and restrained meanings of this phrase, truly applicable to the present matter; of which meanings I shall endeavour in order to propound the chief; and, together, both to unfold and to inculcate the several respective branches of this duty: yet first of all rejecting one or two, which cannot well be applied to this purpose.

To do in another's name, doth sometime denote the assuming another's person, or pretending to be the same with him, the very He. So, *many shall come in my name* (prophesied our Saviour), *saying, I am Christ:*[a] to do thus in Jesus's name, is the part of an Antichrist and an impostor. That sense, therefore, hath nothing to do here.

Again; to do in another's name, doth often imply doing *alterius loco*, or *vice;* in another's name, or stead, as a deputy, or substitute; representing the person, or supplying the office of another. So did the prophets *come, and speak in God's name;* what they declared, or enjoined, being therefore said to be declared and enjoined by God himself: *I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking* (viz. by the prophets, whom he sent, and who are said to come and speak in his name.[b]) And thus the apostles spake in Christ's name: *We are ambassadors for Christ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be recon-*

[j] 1 John ii. 2; 2 Cor. v. 19.
[k] Apoc. i. 5, 6; v. 13.

[a] Matt. xxiv. 5.
[b] Jer. vii. 13; xxvi. 5; xiv. 14; James v. 10; John v. 43; Matt. x. 4; Ezra v. 1.

ciled. Thus also princes govern, and magistrates execute justice in God's name; whence they are styled gods, as being his lieutenants, administering that judgment which belongs originally and principally to him.[c] Now for this sense, neither is it so proper, or convenient here; it agreeing only to some particular persons, and to some peculiar actions of them; insomuch that others presuming to act, according to that manner or kind, in Jesus's name, shall thereby become usurpers and deceivers. We (and to us all this precept is directed) shall heinously transgress our duty, doing any thing thus in his name, without his letters of credence; without being specially called or sent, or being duly by him authorized thereto.

These and such like senses the present matter doth not well admit: the rest that suit thereto, I shall with some distinction in order represent.

I. To do in another's name sometime doth signify to do it out of affection or honour to another; for another's sake, because we love or esteem him; ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι being equivalent to ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματος, and διὰ τὸ ὄνομα. Thus it is said, *Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name; because ye are Christ's* (is added by way of interpretation, that is, out of respect to Christ, because of your relation to him), *shall not lose his reward.*[d] And thus surely we ought to do every thing in Jesus's name: all our actions ought to proceed from a principle of grateful love and reverence towards our gracious Redeemer. *Let all your actions be done in charity*,[e] saith the apostle; if in charity to our neighbour, then much more in love to him, for whose sake we are especially bound to love our neighbour. Upon any undertaking, or applying ourselves to action, we should so reflect thereupon, as to consider, whether that we are going about be apt to please him, and conducible to his honour; if so, remembering what he hath done and suffered for us (what excellent blessings he hath purchased for us, what exceeding benefits he hath conferred upon us), we should, out of love and respect to him, readily perform it; but if it otherwise appear displeasing or dishonourable to him, we should, from the same principles, carefully decline it. The duty is certain, and the reason thereof evident; for inducement to the practice thereof, observe St. Paul's example; who thus represents himself, in the main employment of his life, acting: *The love of Christ constrains us; judging this, that he died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to him that died and rose for them:*[f] the love of Christ, begot and maintained by a consideration of his great benefits conferred on him, was the spring that set St. Paul on work, that excited and urged him forward to action.[g] Thus doing, we shall do in Jesus's name; but if we act out of love to ourselves (to promote our own interests, to gratify our own desires, to procure credit or praise to ourselves), we act only in our own names, and for our own sakes; not in the name, or for the sake of Jesus.[h]

II. To do in another's name implies doing, chiefly, for the interest or advantage of another, upon another's behalf or account, as the servants or factors of another. For, when the business is another's, and the fruit or benefit emergent belong to another, he that prosecutes that business may well be, and is commonly, supposed to act in that other's name. Thus our Saviour is in St. John's Gospel expressed *to come, to speak, to act in God's name;* because he did God's business, (*the work which God gave him to accomplish*), and entirely *sought the glory of God*,[i] as he there himself often avouches and professes. And thus, in imitation of him, ought we also to do all things in his name; remembering that we *are not our own men, but the servants of Jesus* (servants to him not only by nature, as to our Maker and Preserver, but by purchase, as to our Redeemer, who bought us with the greatest price;[j] and by compact also, we having freely undertaken his service, and expecting wages from him), that we have therefore

[c] 2 Cor. v. 20; Rom. xiii. 4; Deut. i. 17.
[d] Compare Mark ix. 41; Matt. x. 41; xxiv. 9; xix. 29; xviii. 5.
[e] 1 Cor. xvi. 14.
[f] Φιλοτιμούμεθα αὐτῷ εὐάρεστοι εἶναι.—2 Cor. v. 9, 14.
[g] 1 Thess. ii. 6; Tit. i. 11; 1 Pet. v. 2; Phil. i. 15.
[h] Matt. xxiii. 5.
[i] John vii. 18; viii. 54; x. 25; v. 43, 36; vi. 28; ix. 3, 4.
[j] 1 Cor. vi. 19; vii. 23; Heb. ix. 12; 1 Pet. i. 18; Rom. xiv. 8, 9.

no business or employment properly our own, but that all our business is (or should be) to serve him, and promote his glory: *Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of our Lord.*[k] Whatever, I say, we do, we therefore should perform it with this formal reference, as it were, toward Jesus, as his servants, from conscience of the duty we owe to him; with intention therein to serve him; in expectation of reward only from him. So doth St. Paul (in prosecution of this same precept) beneath in this chapter enjoin us, that, *whatever we do, we perform it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing* (or considering) *that from the Lord we shall receive the recompense of the inheritance; for that we serve the Lord Christ.*[l] In like manner otherwhere he teaches us to do what we do, *not as pleasers of men* (not upon any inferior accounts), *but as servants of Christ, knowing and considering that we have a Master in heaven.*[m] But,

III. Doing in another's name imports frequently doing by the appointment and command, or by the commission and authority of another. *Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει, καὶ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι; By what power and in what name have ye done these things?*[n] say the high priests to the apostles; that is, who did appoint or authorize you to do thus? Their answer was ready: *in the name of Jesus*, who had sent, commissionated, and commanded them to preach and propagate that doctrine.[o] And thus we are also bound to do all things in the name of Jesus, regulating all our actions by his law; conforming our whole lives to his will; acting, not only out of good principles (principles of love and conscience), but according to right rules; the rules of his word and example, which he hath declared and prescribed to us:[p] for what is done beside his warrant and will cannot be rightly esteemed done in his name; will not as so be avowed or accepted by him; no unjust or impious action will he upon any terms countenance or patronise. It was once a famous saying, *All mischief begins in nomine Domini;*[q] and much, surely, more than one way, hath been done under the like notion or pretence: but this will not serve to excuse the doing of that, in the day of final reckoning for our actions. For *there will be many*, we are taught, *that shall in that day, by specious professions of having done this or that in Christ's name*, veil their transgressions and their neglects of duty, *saying, Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name prophesied, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful things?*[r] who yet, our Lord himself assures us, shall have this reply made to them, *I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*[s] There will be those that shall claim acquaintance with Christ in such terms: *Lord, we have eaten and drank before thee; and thou hast taught in our streets;* whom yet our Lord will disclaim with a, *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.* It is not, we see, prophesying in Christ's name (or preaching about him), nor frequent attendance upon those who do so, nor speaking much or hearing much concerning him; it is not having great gifts or endowments conferred by Christ (not even so great as that of working miracles;) it is not familiar converse with Christ, or making frequent addresses to him, that can sanctify all man's actions, or so entitle them to the name of Christ, as to secure his person from being disavowed and rejected by Christ; it is only the conforming all our actions to his holy laws, that can assure us to be acknowledged and accepted by him. This I could wish they would consider, who seem by such pretences, to commend or excuse their actions, although otherwise irregular and plainly contrary to the laws of Christ; such as those of being meek and charitable toward all men; living peaceably ourselves, and endeavouring to promote peace among others; abstaining from rash and harsh censures, from reviling and defaming others; paying reverence and obedience to superiors; and the like laws of Christ, not only express and manifest, but even of the highest rank and consequence among them; being mainly conducing to that

[k] 1 Cor. x. 31. [l] 1 Col. iii. 23, 24.
[m] Eph. vi. 6, 9. [n] Acts iv. 7.
[o] John v. 36, 37, 43; xiv. 11; xvii. 18; Luke xxiv. 47; 2 Cor. v. 20.
[p] 1 Cor. vi. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 6.
[q] John xvi. 2.
[r] Matt. vii. 22. [s] Luke xiii. 26.

which our Lord especially tenders, the public welfare and benefit of mankind; the violation whereof cannot be justified by pretending any special regard whatever to Christ, or any collateral performances done, whether truly or seemingly, in his name. We do but deceive ourselves, if we conceit that, because we think much, or speak much of Jesus, or have a zeal for something good, all our actions are done in his name: no, it only can be justly impressed upon, can warrant and sanctify actions truly good and agreeable to his law; it were an abuse and forgery to do it, like stamping the king's name or image on counterfeit metal; upon brass or tin, instead of gold or silver. Good intention and good principles are indeed, as it were, the form and soul of good actions; but their being just and lawful are the body and matter of them; necessarily also concurring to their essence and integrity; they cannot subsist without it, but must pass, as it were, for ghosts and shadows. We are therefore concerned, in all our doings, to have an especial regard to Christ's law as their rule; that will render them capable of Christ's name, and denominate them Christian.

IV. Hereto we may add, that what we do in imitation of Jesus, and in conformity to his practice (that living rule and copy proposed to us), we may be said peculiarly to do in his name. As a picture useth to bear his name whom it was made to represent, and whom it resembles; so if we set Christ's example before us, and endeavour to transcribe it; if our life, in the principal lineaments of sanctity and goodness, do resemble his holy life; they may well bear his name. But if our practice be unlike and unsuitable to his, we cannot affix his name thereto without great presumption and abuse; such as would be committed, if to a draught of foul hue and ugly features, we should attribute the name of some most handsome and goodly person, of high worth and quality. To do thus in Jesus's name (with such a regard to him) is a duty often prescribed to us, not only as relating to some cases and actions (as when his charity, his patience, his humility, his meekness, are signally commended to our imitation), but generally, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought, as he walked, so himself also to walk;* that is, whoever professes himself a Christian ought to conform the whole tenor of his conversation to that of Jesus;[t] to endeavour in every imitable perfection to resemble him. So that whenever we undertake any action, we should do well to look upon this pattern; thus, as it were, examining and inquiring of ourselves: What did my Master in this or the like case? Do I do the same thing, do I act from the same principles, do I proceed in the same manner as he did? Am I herein his disciple and follower? If so, in his name let me go on cheerfully; if not, let me forbear. Doing thus will not be only according to our duty, but an especial help and furtherance of good practice.

V. To do in another's name doth sometimes import doing by any power derived, or virtue imparted by another; for that a thing so done may be imputed, should be ascribed to that other. So, *Through thee* (saith the Psalmist) *will we push down our enemies; in thy name* will we throw down those that hate us*[u]—(*through thee*, and *in thy name*, signify the same thing.) So did the apostles cast out devils, and perform their other miracles, in Jesus's name (διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος, *by his name*, it is sometimes expressed), that is, by a divine virtue imparted from him.[v] To this I add another acception, scarce different (at least as to our purpose) from that, according to which, doing in another's name signifies doing it in trust, or confidence reposed upon another, with expectation of aid, or hope of good success from another. So, *We rest on thee* (said good king Asa) *and in thy name we go against this multitude;*[w] in thy name, that is, hoping for assistance and success from thee. And thus it is said, that *David went out* against *Goliah in the name of the Lord of hosts;*[x] that is, confiding in God's help, as his only weapon and defence: thus also did the holy apostles work their miracles in Jesus's name, ἐπὶ

* Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι. LXX.

[t] Eph. v. 1, 2; 1 Cor. x. 1; John xv. 12, 13, 14; Heb. xii. 2; John xiii. 15; Phil. ii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6.

[u] Psal. xliv. 5; lxxxix. 24.

[v] Matt. vii. 22; Mark ix. 38; Acts iii. 6; iv. 10, 30; John xvii. 11.

[w] 2 Chron. xiv. 11. [x] 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, *by faith in his name*, saith St. Peter, *his name hath made this man strong*;[y] that is, we did only trust in his divine power, and it was that power of his which restored that weak person to his strength. And thus also is it our duty to do all things in our Saviour's name; with faith and hope in him; wholly relying upon him for direction and assistance; expecting from him only a blessing and happy issue of our undertakings. What we do in confidence of our wisdom or ability, or in affiance upon the help of any other person or thing, we do in our own name, or in the name of that thing (or that person) in whom we so confide; to ourselves, or to such auxiliaries, we shall be ready to attribute the success, and to render the glory of the performance; *glorifying in our own arm*, and *sacrificing to our net*.[z] But what we undertake only depending upon our Lord for ability and success, may therefore bear his name, because our faith derives the power from him, which enables us happily to perform it; so that the performance may truly be attributed to him, and to him we shall be apt to ascribe it. And thus, I say, we are certainly obliged to do every thing in his name (in his name alone), retaining a constant sense both of our own infirmity, and of the impotency of all other created things, and consequently a total diffidence both in ourselves and in them; but reposing all our trust in the direction and assistance of our all-wise and almighty Lord; of Jesus, to *whom all power in heaven and earth is given*[a] (who indeed had it originally by nature as God; but also further hath acquired it by desert and purchase;) into whose hands all things are given; and all things are put under his feet; who hath obtained this power in design to use it for our good; and is thereby always ready to help us in our need, if we have recourse unto him, and rely upon him; making him what St. Paul styles him, *our hope*; our only hope; renouncing all other confidences not subordinate to him.[b] To do so is a duty evidently grounded as well upon the reason of the thing, as upon the will and command of God; to do otherwise is no less a palpable folly, than a manifest injury to God. For, in truth, neither have we nor any other created thing any power, other than such as he is pleased freely to dispense;* and which is not continually both for its being and its efficacy subject to him, so that he may at his pleasure subtract it, or obstruct its effect: *No king is saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety*: whence it is plain that we cannot upon any created power ground a solid assurance of success in any undertaking;† it will be *leaning upon a broken reed*[c] (which cannot support us, and will pierce our hands), both a vain and a mischievous confidence; that will abuse us, bringing both disappointment and guilt upon us; the guilt of wronging our Lord many ways, by arrogating to ourselves, or assigning to others, what he only doth truly deserve, and what peculiarity of right belongs to him: withdrawing the same from him; implying him unable or unwilling to assist us, and to do us good; neglecting to use that strength which he so dearly purchased and so graciously tenders; so disappointing him, and defeating, as it were, his purposes of favour and mercy towards us. On the other side, trusting only upon our Saviour, we act wisely and justly, gratefully and officiously; for that, in doing so, we build our hopes upon most sure grounds; upon a wisdom that cannot be deceived; upon a strength that cannot be withstood; upon a goodness that hath no limits; upon a fidelity that can never fail. For that we act with an humility and sobriety of mind suitable to our condition, and to the reason of things; for that we thereby declare our good opinion of him, as only able, and very willing to do us good; for that we render him his just honour and due; we comply with his earnest desires, we

[y] Acts iii. 16.
[z] Hab. i. 16.
[a] Matt. xxviii. 18.
[b] John iii. 35; xiii. 3; xvii. 2; Heb. i. 2; ii. 8; Eph. i. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Phil. ii. 9; Apoc. v. 12; 1 Tim. i. 1.

* The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,—Eccl. ix. 11. By strength shall no man prevail.—1 Sam. ii. 9; Psal. xxxiii. 17; cxlvi. 3; xliv. 3.

† Isa. xlii. 11,—Beside me there is no Saviour.—Hos. xiii. 4, 10; Psal. cvi. 21; Jer. xiv. 8.

[c] Isa. xxxiv. 6.

promote his gracious designs of mercy and kindness toward us. Hence is it that every where in holy Scripture God so highly commends, so greatly encourages, this duty of trusting alone in him; that he so ill resents, and so strongly deters from the breach or omission thereof: *Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit:*[d] thus in that place, thus in innumerable others, we are threatened not only with disappointment and bad success in our undertakings, but with severe punishment, if we betake ourselves to other succours, and neglect or distrust, or, in so doing, desert God; but are encouraged, not only with assurance of prosperous success, but of additional rewards, if entirely in our proceedings we depend upon and adhere to God. Thus we should do in all, even our most common and ordinary affairs, which no less than the rest are subject to his power, and governed by his care. For you know how St. James doth reprehend it as a piece of naughty boasting and arrogance, to say, *The morrow we will go to this city, and stay there a year, and trade and gain:* instead of saying *If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that;*[e] that is, to resolve upon, undertake, or prosecute any affair, without submission to God's will, and dependence on his providence: but especially we ought, in matters and actions more spiritual, to practice this duty; for that to the performing of these we have of ourselves, a peculiar impotence and unfitness; needing therefore a more especial assistance from our Lord; that the success of them more particularly depends upon him; that the glory of them in an especial manner is appropriate, and, as it were, consecrate to him.

If it be a folly and a crime to think we can do any thing without God, it is much more so to think we can do any thing good without him; it is an arrogance, it is an idolatry, it is a sacrilege much more vain and wicked to do so.* To imagine that we can, by the force of our own reason and resolution, achieve any of those most high and hard enterprises, to which by the rules of virtue and piety we are engaged; that we can, by our own conduct and prowess, encounter and withstand, defeat and vanquish those so crafty, so mighty enemies of our salvation (our own fleshly desires, the menaces and allurements of the world, the sleights and powers of darkness), is much a worse presumption, than in other affairs of greatest difficulty to expect success without the divine assistance and blessing, than in other most dangerous battles to think we can, *by our own bow and by our own spear, save ourselves;*[f] that we can obtain victory otherwise than from his hand and disposal, who is the Lord of hosts. Reason tells us, and experience also shows, and our Saviour hath expressly said it, *That* (in these things) *without him* (without his especial influence and blessing) *we can do nothing;*[g] he tells us, that we are but branches, inserted into him; so that, without continually drawing sap from him, we can have no life or vigour spiritual. The wisest and best of men have, by their practice, taught us to acknowledge so much; to depend wholly upon him, to ascribe all to him in this kind. *Why* (say St. Peter and St. John) *do ye wonder at this? or why gaze ye upon us, as if by our own power, or piety, we had made this man walk?—His name,* (the name of Jesus), *through faith in his name, hath made this man strong;*[h] that acknowledgment indeed concerns a miraculous work; but spiritual works are in reality no less, they requiring as much or more of virtue super-

[d] Psal. cxlvi. 5; xl. 4; xliv. 6; xxxiii. 18; cxlvii. 11; xxxiv. 22; cxxv. 1; xxxi. 19; lxi. 4; xci. 4; cxviii. 8; lxxviii. 22; lxvi. 2; cxii. 7; Isa. li. 5; lvii. 13; l. 7; xxvi. 3; Jer. xiv. 8; xvii. 5, 6, &c.

[e] Matt. x. 29, 30; James iv. 13.

* Οὔτε γὰρ ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἄνευ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα συναναφορᾶς εὖ πράξεις.—Ant. iii. 13.

[f] Psal. xliv. 6.

[g] John xv. 5.

[h] Acts iii. 12, 16.

natural, or the present interpositions of God's hand to effect them; they make less show without, but need as great efficacy within: so our Saviour, it seems, did imply, when he said, *He that believes in me, the works that I do he shall do, and greater works than these.*[i] Every good and faithful man doth not work miracles; yet somewhat greater, it seems, by the grace of Christ, *he performs:* however, to these St. Paul referred, when he affimed, *I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me;*[j] nothing was so hard that he feared to attempt, that he despaired to master and go through with by the help of Christ; and, *Not* (saith he again) *that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*[k] he was as sensible of his own inability, as he was confident in the gracious help of Christ. Thus should we do all things in the name of Jesus; and it is not only a duty to do it, but it may be a great encouragement to us that we are capable of doing it; a great comfort to consider, that in all honest undertakings we have so ready and so sure an aid to second and further us in them; confiding in which, nothing is so difficult but we may easily accomplish;[l] (*a grain of faith* will be able *to remove mountains;*) nothing is so hazardous, but we may safely venture on (*walking on the sea, treading upon serpents and scorpions*, daring *all the power of the enemy:*[m]) In his name we may, if our duty or good reason calls us forth, how small and weak soever, how destitute soever of defensive arms, or weapons offensive, naked and unarmed, with a sling and a stone, go out against the biggest and best armed Philistine, nothing doubting of victory: our weakness itself, if we be humbly conscious and sensible thereof, will be an advantage to us, as it was to St. Paul; to all effects and purposes, *the grace of our Lord will be sufficient for us,*[n] if we apply it, and trust therein. But further,

VI. To do in another's name may denote, to do it with such regard to another, that we acknowledge (that, I say, we heartily and thankfully acknowledge) our hope of prospering in what we do; our expectation of acceptance, favour, or reward, to be grounded on him; that they are procured by his merits and means, are bestowed only for his sake. Thus our Saviour bids us to *offer our prayers in his name;*[o] that is, representing unto God his meritorious performances in our behalf, as the ground of our access to God, of our hope to obtain from him what we request. So also we are enjoined to *give thanks in his name*[p] that is, with persuasion and acknowledgment, that only in respect to him we become capable to receive or enjoy any good thing; that, in effect, all the blessings by divine mercy vouchsafed us have been procured by him for us, are through him conveyed unto us. And thus also we should do all things in the name of Jesus, offering all our deeds to God as sacrifices and services unworthy of acceptance, both in themselves and as proceeding from us; but pleasing and acceptable to God only for his sake. We should do well, upon all occasions to remember our natural condition, and the general state of mankind; such as it was before he did undertake, such as it would have continued still, had he not undertaken for it; that our race had forfeited and was fallen from God's favour; having injured him beyond all power of making him any reparation or satisfaction;[q] and thence it was secluded from all means and hopes apparent of happiness, was exposed and tended downright unto misery; that we consequently had no ground to hope that God (from whom, no less in mind and in deed, than by reason of our guilt and state of condemnation, we were estranged) would in kindness bestow any good upon us, or from us accept favourably any thing we should do. But that, by our Saviour's performances, the case is altered; he by his entire obedience having so pleased God, by his patient submission to God's will having so appeased his anger and satisfied his injustice, that God is not only reconciled, but hath an especial favour, bears an earnest good-will toward us. That now the good things

[i] John xiv. 12. [j] Phil. iv. 13.
[k] 2 Cor. iii. 5.
[l] Οὐδὲν ἀδυνατήσει ὑμῖν, — Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21.
[m] Luke xvii. 6; Matt. xiv. 29; Luke x. 19.
[n] 2 Cor. xii. 9.
[o] John xiv. 13; xv. 16; xvi. 23, 24.
[p] Eph. v. 20; iii. 21.
[q] Rom. iii. 23; xi. 32; Gal. iii. 22.

we possess, we may truly esteem as blessings, and enjoy them with real comfort, as proceeding from mercy and kindness: now what we honestly endeavour, we may hope shall please God; now we have a free access to God, and may cheerfully present our sacrifies of duty and devotion, with a full persuasion that they shall be accepted.[r] But all this happiness, all these favours and privileges, we must always remember to come from the continued procurement and mediation of the Beloved; so as ever to be ready to acknowledge it, and to return our thanks therefor. To this sense that our apostle here had an especial regard, the words immediately following imply: *Doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him;* that is, in all things we do, taking occasion to render thanks to God, as for his sake being merciful and bountiful to us; bestowing upon us the good we enjoy, blessing our endeavours, accepting our performances. We must not conceit, that any regard any mercy, any favour, any reward, is due to us in equity, is in effect conferred upon us, upon our own personal score (for, how mean things are we in comparison of his greatness; how vile and filthy things must we appear to his most pure and all discerning eyes; how unworthy of his regard and of his affection must we needs take ourselves to be, if we do but well consider, and are acquainted with ourselves!) but that *in him* (*i. e.* for his sake, and by his means) *God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing*, in him ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς, *God hath favoured*, and cast his grace upon *us*;[s] valuing us, notwithstanding all our imperfections; loving us, notwithstanding all the spots with which we are defiled, notwithstanding all the offences we have committed; for the relation and alliance we have to Jesus. Nor must we look on our services (the best we are able to perform) as in themselves grateful or satisfactory: for all of them, if we mark them well, we shall find not only quite *unprofitable to God*, but very defective in many respects; for, who can say he performs anything both in kind, in manner, in degree, thoroughly right and good, with that ardency of love he owes to God, with that purity of intention, with that earnest vigour of spirit, with that undistractedness of mind, with which he should perform it? No: in all our flock we cannot pick out a sacrifice entire and unblemished; such as God requires, such as duty exacts for us. They need, therefore, (all our services need) to be commended and completed by the beloved Son's perfectly well-pleasing performances;[t] they need to be cleansed and hallowed, by passing through the hands of our most holy and undefiled High Priest; to become sweet and savoury (or to receive that ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, which St. Paul speaks of) from being offered up *in his censer*.[u] In fine, as all our actions should, in our intention, be works of religion dedicated to God's service and honour; sacrifices, as it were, of gratitude and homage to God; so they ought all to be offered up in the name of Jesus. I add further,

VII. Lastly, that to do in the name of Jesus may well imply doing with invocation of him: thus we may understand that place of St. James, where the elders are advised *to pray, and anoint the sick in the Lord's name*,[v] for to anoint them, imploring our Lord's blessing upon them, and upon those means used for their cure. And thus St. Chrysostom* expounds the words; do all in Jesus's name, *that is* (saith he) *imploring him for your helper in all things; always first praying to him, undertake your business.* Doing thus will indeed christen and consecrate our actions; for *all things* (saith our apostle) *are sanctified by the word of God, and prayer*;[w] that is, by God's blessing implored, and obtained by prayer; or, if God's word be there taken for hisl aw, or revealed will, it is there signified, that our actions are not only santified by their lawfulness, or conformity to that good rule, God's declared will; but also by the invocation of his name: however, all our actions, it seems, are unhallowed and profane, if not accompanied with devotion.† That to do thus is our duty,

[r] Acts iii. 26; Eph. ii. 17; iii. 12; Ἐν πεποιθήσει,—Eph. i. 6.
[s] Eph. i. 3, 6.

* In locum.—Αὐτὸν καλῶν βοηθὸν, ἐπὶ πάντων πρότερον αὐτῷ εὐχόμενος, ἅπτου τῶν πραγμάτων.

† Δεῖ πάσης τῆς πράξεως προηγεῖσθαι τὴν προσευχήν.—M. Erem.

Μηδὴν μήτε ποιῶμεν μήτε λέγωμεν πρὶν ἢ τὸν θεὸν

[t] Heb. vii. 26. [u] Eph. v. 2; Rev. viii. 3, 5.
[v] James v. 14. [w] 1 Tim. iv. 5.

appears by those frequent injunctions, to *pray indesinently*, to *pray always*, to *abide instantly in prayer*;[x] which do not only import that we should pray often, and continue with patience and earnestness in prayer, but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among, all our actions, undertaking nothing (at least of consideration or moment) without it. We should do it (our Saviour commands) ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, that is, *on every occasion*:[y] and St. Paul gives the same direction: *Praying* (says he) ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, *on all opportunities, with all prayer and supplication in spirit*;[z] (in spirit, that is, I take it, *in our hearts*[a] at least, and with secret elevations of our mind, if not with our mouth and voice.) And more explicitly otherwhere saith he, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing* (in all your affairs) *by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*[b]* And thus to do (to accompany all our undertakings with prayer) we are indeed concerned upon many accounts. We need God's direction (being ourselves very blind and ignorant) in the choice of what we attempt; that our ends and designs may be good, conducible to God's honour and our own true advantage.[c] For, as the prophet tells us, *The way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his steps*;[d] and, as the Wise Man adds, *Man's goings are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?*[e] (implying, since God only knows what is best for us, that we of ourselves, without his direction, know not what to do, whither to go.) The holy Psalmist signifies the same in those words (very encouraging to the practice of this duty): *What man is he that feareth the Lord?* (that feareth him, that is, who worshippeth him and seeketh his guidance); *him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*[f] We need also (being ourselves not only weak and infirm, but inconstant and unstable) God's assistance and upholding hand in the pursuance of our well-chosen designs (that we may use the best means, and proceed in a straight course; that we may persist upright and steady in our proceedings), that which the Wise Man seems to call, the establishing of our thoughts and promises, as a consequence upon our seeking God's assistance in our actions, and relying thereon: *Commit* (saith he) *thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established*[g] (thou shalt drive on thy good purposes steadily, without stumbling or falling; at least irrecoverably.) So the Psalmist assures us concerning a good man: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; none of his steps shall slide: though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*[h] We also further, as to the final success of our affairs, stand in need of God's blessing; that he, upon whose will altogether depends the disposal of all events, should bestow a good issue unto our endeavours, that they prove not matter of discouragement or discomfort to us; that which also the Psalmist assures us of obtaining, upon condition of our imploring and depending upon God for it: *Commit thy way* (saith he) *unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.*[i] We do thus need in all our affairs the direction, assistance, and blessing of our Lord; but shall not have them without prayer; for the rule is, *Ask and have, seek and find.*[j] Without asking, we are not likely to obtain those gifts; without seeking, we must not hope to find those benefits from God. If we are so proud as to think we do not need them, or so negligent as not to mind them, or so distrustful of the divine power or goodness, that we imagine he

καλέσαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι συνεφάψασθαι τῶν ἐν χερσὶν ἡμῖν ἁπάντων.—Chrys.

Τοῦτο δήγε πάντες ὅσοι καὶ κατὰ βραχὺ σωφροσύνης μετέχουσιν ἐπὶ πάσῃ ὁρμῇ καὶ σμικρῷ καὶ μεγάλου πράγματος θεὸν ἀεί που καλοῦσιν.—Plato Tim. *Vide* Epist. 8. Arr. Epict. 11, 18.

* Bene ac sapienter majores instituerunt, ut rerum agendarum, ita dicendi initium a precationibus caperetur; quod nihil rite, nihilque providenter homines sine Deorum immortalium ope, consilio, honore auspicarentur.—*Plin. in Paneg.*

[x] 1 Thess. v. 17; Luke xviii. 1; Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2.

[y] Luke xi. 36. [z] Eph. vi. 18.

[a] Eph. v. 19,—Ἐν καρδίᾳ.

[b] Phil. iv. 6, 7,—Ἐν παντί.

[c] Job xviii. 7; Isa. xxx. 1; Hos. x. 6; Prov. i. 25, 30; Psal. cvi. 13; xvi. 7; lxxiii. 24; cvii. 11.

[d] Jer. x. 23. [e] Prov. xx. 24; xvi. 9.

[f] Psal. xxv. 12, 9. [g] Prov. xvi. 3.

[h] Psal. xxxvii. 23, 24, 31.

[i] Psal. xxxvii. 5; cxix. 5, 133.

[j] Luke xi. 9, 10; John xiv. 13; Psal. ix. 10.

cannot or will not afford them to us, we are like to be so unhappy as to want them. God expects from us, that we should, in whatever we do, acknowledge him: (it is the Wise Man's expression, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths:*[k] acknowledge him as the only faithful guide and counsellor; as the only sufficient helper and protector; as the only free arbitrator and donor of good success. Nothing, therefore, is well done, which is not thus done: we cannot be satisfied in what we do; we cannot hope for a comfortable end thereof; we cannot expect a blessing from God, if we have refused, or if we have neglected the recommending our proceedings to his care. We can, I say, do nothing—not eat, not sleep, not trade, not travel, not study—with any true content, any reasonable security, any satisfactory hope, if we have not first humbly implored God's favour; committing ourselves and our business into his hand, that hand which dispenseth all good, which alone can keep off all danger and mischief from us. *God shall send his angel before thee:*[l] so did our father Abraham send his servant about his business; having questionless before commended it to God by prayer. *God Almighty give you mercy before the man:*[m] so did Jacob give his sons their despatches toward Egypt. In such a manner did we enter upon all our affairs, we could not but be full of hope, and void of care concering them; for that commonly we are so full of anxiety about the event of what we undertake, whence doth it arise, but from our neglect of this duty? for, having committed our business into so sure a hand, how could we further be solicitous about it? Had we, according to St. Peter's advice, *cast our care upon the Lord;* or, *cast our burden upon him,*[n] as the Psalmist exhorts us; had we duly sought and invoked him who *never faileth them that seek him*, who *is nigh to all them that call upon him;*[o] we should not have such a load of troublesome care resting upon us; our hearts would be light and free as to all these things; we should be secure, that nothing very bad or disastrous could befall us; we should experience it true, what the prophet affirms in that prayer or psalm to God, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee. Be careful for nothing*, St. Paul bids us; *but in every thing let your requests be made known to God.*[p] If we perform the latter part, the former will naturally be consequent thereon. Thus, in the last place, should we do all things in the name of Jesus (upon all occasions praying to him, or, which is all one, to God, in his name;) which that we may do (that we are allowed and encouraged to do it) is also a privilege, and an advantage invaluable.

In so many ways and particular respects may we and ought we to perform all we do in the name of Jesus: we should do every thing out of grateful affection and respect to him, as our chief principle; every thing as his servants, aiming especially at the pleasing of him, and promoting his honour, as our principal end; every thing according to his will and commandment, as our constant rule; every thing after his example, as our best pattern; every thing in confidence of his gracious assistance and blessing, as our only strength and support; every thing with hope of acceptance purely upon his account; every thing with thankful sense and acknowledgment to God for the mercies and favours conveyed unto us by his means, conferred upon us for his sake; every thing with humble invocation of him, or with prayer to God in his name: in sum, every thing with a due and proper regard had to him; so that he be not passed over or left out in any thing we undertake; but come always into consideration, according as our relations to him and our obligations to him do require. In the performances of which duties, the life indeed of our religion (of all our good practice, of all our devotion) doth consist.

To all this I shall only subjoin the mention of one general duty, implied in all and each of those we have propounded, which is this:—

VIII. That our Lord Jesus should be frequently (and in a manner continually; always, as to the habitual disposition of

[k] Prov. iii. 6. [l] Gen. xxiv. 7.
[m] Gen. xliii. 14.
[n] 1 Pet. v. 7; Psal. lv. 22.
[o] Psal. ix. 10; Old Transl. lxx. 4; Psal. cxlv. 18; cxii. 7, 8.
[p] Isa. xxvi. 3; Phil. iv. 6.

our souls, actually upon all fit occasions) present to our minds and thoughts. This, I say, is plainly implied in the former duties. For, how is it possible we should perform all our actions (yea, utter all our words) with any sort of regard to him, if we seldom think of him? Such is the nimbleness and activity of our minds, that it is feasible enough to do thus; and, in respect to other objects, we commonly experience it done; for *animus est ubi amat;* whatever we effect, our mind, however otherwise employed, will be thinking on it; it is hard to restrain our thoughts from it (the covetous man's heart will be among his bags; the voluptuous man's mind will be in his dishes; the studious person will be musing on his notions, do he what he can:) why, then, may we not as well, as often direct our minds toward our Lord, and mix the remembrance of him with all other employments or entertainments of our thoughts? To do so is surely very requisite, and very expedient toward our good practice. Things far distant, or long absent, can have small efficacy, or influence: it is so, we see, in natural, and it is no less so in moral casualties; wherein representation to the fancy and memory have a force answerable to that which real conjunction and approximation have in nature. As the heat and light of the sun, the further he goes, and the longer he stays from us, do the more, proportionably, decrease; so, according to our less frequently and less seriously thinking upon any object, our affection and our respect thereto decay. If therefore we desire, according to our duty, to maintain in our hearts such dispositions (due affection and due reverence) toward Jesus; if we intend to suit our actions accordingly with due regard to him; we should, in order to those purposes, apply this so necessary and useful mean, of frequently bending our minds toward him; the doing of which, in likelihood, will conduce much to the sanctifying our affections, and to the governing our actions in a constant performance of our duty. For we can hardly, sure (admitting we do seriously believe him to be such as we profess to believe him), with any competent attention think of him, but that thought will be apt to restrain us from doing ill, to incite us to do well; since, together with that thought, some of his excellent perfections, some of our principal relations, and some of our great obligations to him (each of which hath much virtue and force to those purposes), will interpose and represent themselves. Frequently thinking of him, we shall sometimes apprehend him with incessant toil labouring in the service of God, and in promoting the welfare of men;[q] sometimes we shall imagine him undergoing all kind of contumelies and bitter pains, suffering by the cruel hands and tongues of spiteful men; we shall, as it were, behold him bleeding under the scourge, and hanging upon the cross, for our sakes. Sometimes he will appear to our minds crowned with majesty, reigning in sovereign power and glory, having all things in subjection under his feet; sometimes also he will be represented as our Judge, before whose tribunal we must all shortly stand, and be obliged to render an account of all our doings: which thoughts passing through our minds, will be apt to make some impression upon our hearts, to have some influence upon our actions. For, can that most amiable and most venerable *idea* of a person so entirely pure and holy, so meek and humble, so full of benignity and charity toward all men (particularly toward ourselves), be otherwise than apt to beget some especial love and reverence toward him; than incline us strongly to do well, yea, than teach us what and how we should do so, in conformity to such a pattern set before us? it occurring to our thoughts, that he is our Lord and Master (who made us, and maintains us; who purchased us to himself, and redeemed us from miserable slavery by his own heart-blood;) how can it fail to raise in us some awe, some sense of duty toward him? Will not the apprehension of what he did and what he suffered for us powerfully mind us, that, according to all justice and equity, in all ingenuity and gratitude, we are bound to do only that which will please him? If we think of Jesus, when we are setting upon any action, shall we not thereupon be apt thus to interrogate ourselves?—Shall I do otherwise than he did, or would have done, so rendering myself unlike or contrary to him? Shall I be so unfaithful to my glorious Master, as to disserve

[q] Acts x. 38.

him, or to neglect his service? Shall I be so unworthy toward my gracious Redeemer, my best friend, my most bountiful benefactor, as to disoblige him, to wrong him, to dishonour him, to grieve him by thus doing? Shall I be so vain and rash as to cross him who is my King, able to control and subdue me? as to offend him who is my Judge, resolved to condemn and punish me? Shall I willfully forfeit that friendship and favour of his, upon which all my happiness doth depend? Shall I procure his displeasure and enmity, from which my utter ruin must inevitably follow? Such considerations have a natural connection with our frequent thinking upon, and the presence, as it were, of our blessed Saviour to our minds; which therefore may be commended to us as an excellent instrument of bettering our hearts and our lives.

To conclude: Let us always remember, and consider, that we are Christians, related unto Christ Jesus, and called by his name; and as so, in his name let us do all things.

Lord of all power and might; who art the author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XXXIV.

OF BEING IMITATORS OF CHRIST.

1 COR. iv. 16.—*I beseech you, be followers of me:* or, I exhort you, be imitators of me.*

ST. PAUL, by an impartial reflection upon his heart and life, being well assured that he by the divine Spirit was enlightened with a certain knowledge of all necessary truth, and endued with plentiful measures of divine grace; being conscious of a sincere zeal in himself to honour God, and benefit men; being satisfied, that with integrity he did suit his conversation to the dictates of a good conscience, to the sure rule of God's law, and to the perfect example of his Lord; that his intentions were pure and right, his actions warrantable, and the tenor of his life conspicuously blameless, doth upon all occasions (not out of any self-conceitedness, arrogance, or ostentation, from which he, by frequent acknowledgment of his own defects and his miscarriages, and by ascribing all the good he had, or did, to the grace and mercy of God, doth sufficiently clear himself; but from an earnest desire to glorify God, and edify his disciples) describe, and set forth his own practice, proposing it as a rule, pressing it upon them as an argument, an encouragement, an obligation, to the performance of several duties. So by it he directeth and urgeth the Ephesians to a charitable compliance, or complaisance; a sweet and inoffensive demeanour toward others: *Give no offence* (saith he) *neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved: be ye followers of me:*[a] so he guides and provokes the Philippians to endeavours of proficiency in grace, and the study of Christian perfection: *Nevertheless* (saith he to them) *whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing: brethren, be followers together of me, and mark such as walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.*[b] By the like instance and argument, he moveth the Thessalonians to a sober and orderly conversation, to industry in their calling, to self-denial, and a generous disregard of private interest: *For yourselves* (saith he) *know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail day and night, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example to you to follow us.*[c] The same persons he commendeth, as having by this means been induced to a patient constancy in faith and good works: *Ye know* (saith he) *what manner of men we were among you for your sake, and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the*

* Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.

[a] 1 Cor. x. 32, 33; iv. 16.
[b] Phil. iii. 16, 17.
[c] 2 Thess. iii. 7, 8, 9.

word in much affliction.[d] The practice of all virtue and goodness he also thus recommendeth under this rule and obligation: *Those things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.*[e] Thus in our text (referring it to the context) he urgeth the Christians, his disciples at Corinth, to fidelity and diligence in the charges and affairs committed to them, to humility, patience, and charity; wherein he declareth himself to have set before them an evident and exact pattern. Which practice of St. Paul doth chiefly teach us two things; that we be careful to give, and that we be ready to follow good example: the latter of which duties more directly and immediately agreeth to the intent of this place; and it, therefore, I shall only now insist upon: the subject and scope of my discourse shall be to show, that it is our duty and concernment to regard the practices of good men, and to follow their example. To which purpose we may observe,

I. That it is the manner of the apostles, upon all accasions, to inculcate this duty: we heard St. Paul; hear St. James: *Take* (saith he) *my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction: Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy:*[f] and the apostle to the Hebrews: *We desire* (saith he) *that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises:*[g] and again, *Wherefore, seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*[h] And St. Peter: *Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.*[i] And wherever the eminent deeds of holy men are mentioned, it is done with an intimation at least, or tacit supposition, that we are obliged to follow their example.

II. We may consider that to this end (that we might have worthy patterns to imitate) the goodness of God hath raised up in all ages such excellent persons, furnishing them with rare endowments, and with continual influences of his grace assisting them, to this purpose, that they might not only instruct us with wholesome doctrine, but lead us also by good example in the paths of righteousness. For certainly what St. Paul saith concerning the sins and punishments of bad men, is no less applicable to the virtuous deeds and happy examples of good men: *All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*[j]

III. *They are written for our admonition:* it was a special design of God's providence in recording and recommending to our regard the divine histories. They were not framed as monuments of a fruitless memory and fame to them; they were not proposed to us as entertainments of our curiosity, as objects of wonder, as matters of idle discourse; that unconcernedly we should gaze upon them, or talk about them, as children look on fine gays: but they are set before us, as copies to transcribe, as lights to guide us in our way to happiness.* So that if we will not ingratefully frustrate the intentions of divine Providence for our good, we must dispose ourselves to imitate those illustrious patterns of virtue and piety.

IV. We may further consider, that, in the nature of the thing itself, good example is of singular advantage to us, as being apt to have a mighty virtue, efficacy, and influence upon our practice; which consideration should much engage us to regard it, applying it as an instrument of making ourselves good, and consequently of becoming happy. Good example is, as I say, of exceeding advantage to practice upon many accounts.

[d] 1 Thess. i. 5, 6.
[e] Phil iv 9.
[f] James v. 10, 11.
[g] Heb. vi. 11, 12.
[h] Heb. xii. 1.
[i] 1 Pet. iii. 1, 6.

* Μεγίστη δὲ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ καθήκοντος εὕρεσιν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῶν θειοπνεύστων γραφῶν· ἐν ταύταις γὰρ καὶ αἱ τῶν πράξεων ὑποθῆκαι εὑρίσκονται, καὶ οἱ βίοι τῶν μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν ἀνάγραπτοι παραδεδομένοι οἷον εἰκόνες τινὲς ἔμψυχοι τῆς κατὰ θεὸν πολιτείας, τῷ μιμήματι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων πρόκεινται.—Bas. ad Greg. Ep. 2.

[j] 1 Cor. x. 11.

1. Examples do more compendiously, easily, and pleasantly inform our minds, and direct our practice, than precepts, or any other way or instrument of discipline. Precepts are delivered in an universal and abstracted manner, naked, and void of all circumstantial attire, without any intervention, assistance, or suffrage of sense; and, consequently, can have no vehement operation upon the fancy, and soon do fly the memory; like flashes of lightning, too subtle to make any great impression, or to leave any remarkable footsteps, upon what they encounter: they must be expressed in nice terms, and digested in exact method: they are various, and in many disjointed pieces conspire to make up an entire body of direction: they do also admit of divers cases, and require many exceptions, or restrictions, which to apprehend distinctly, and retain long in memory, needs a tedious labour, and continual attention of mind, together with a piercing and steady judgment. But good example, with less trouble, more speed, and greater efficacy, causes us to comprehend the business, representing it like a picture exposed to sense, having the parts orderly disposed and completely united, suitably clothed and dressed up in its circumstances; contained in a narrow compass, and perceptible by one glance, so easily insinuating itself into the fancy, and durably resting therein: in it you see at once described, the thing done, the quality of the actor, the manner of doing, the minute seasons, measures, and adjuncts of the action; with all which you might not perhaps by numerous rules be acquainted; and this in the most facile, familiar, and delightful way of instruction, which is by experience, history, and observation of sensible events. A system of precepts, though exquisitely compacted, is, in comparison, but a *skeleton*; a dry, meagre, lifeless bulk, exhibiting nothing of person, place, time, manner, degree, wherein chiefly the flesh and blood, the colours and graces, the life and soul of things do consist: whereby they please, affect, and move us: but example imparts thereto a goodly corpulency, a life, a motion; renders it conspicuous, specious, and active, transforming its notional universality into the reality of singular subsistence. This discourse is verified by various experience; for we find all masters of art and science explicating, illustrating, and confirming their general rules and precepts by particular examples. Mathematicians demonstrate their *theorems* by *schemes* and *diagrams*, which, in effect, are but sensible instances; orators back their *enthymemes* (or rational argumentations) with *inductions* (or singular examples:) philosophers allege the practice of Socrates, Zeno, and the like persons of famous wisdom and virtue, to authorize their doctrine: politics and civil prudence is more easily and sweetly drawn out of good history, than out of books *de Republica*. Artificers describe *models*, and set patterns before their disciples, with greater success than if they should deliver accurate rules and precepts to them. For who would not more readily learn to build, by viewing carefully the parts and frame of a well-contrived structure, than by a studious inquiry into the rules of architecture? or to draw, by setting a good picture before him, than by merely speculating upon the laws of perspective? or to write fairly and expeditely, by imitating one good copy, than by hearkening to a thousand oral prescriptions; the understanding of which, and faculty of applying them to practice, may prove more difficult and tedious, than the whole practice itself as directed by a copy? Neither is the case much different in moral concernments; one good example may represent more fully and clearly to us the nature of a virtue, than any verbose description thereof can do: in sooner time, and with greater ease, we may learn our duty by regarding the deportment of some excellent person, than by attending to many philosophical discourses concerning it.* For instance, if we desire to know what faith is, and

* Xen. Ἀπομν. 4.—It was Xenophon's observation, grounded upon his own experience, that the memory of Socrates' conversation did greatly profit his acquaintance. Τὸ μεμνῆσθαι μὰ τάφοντος οὐ μικρὰ ὠφελεῖ τοὺς εἰωθότας αὐτῷ συνεῖναι. And Seneca saith, that the crowd of philosophers which followed the same wise man, derived more of their ethics from his manners than his words: *plus ex moribus quam ex verbis Socratis traxit*.—Sen. Ep. 11. And he that shall reflect upon the story concerning his behaviour when he was by malicious envy persecuted to death, may perhaps be more edified thereby, than by all his subtle discourses about death, and the soul's state after it.

how we should rely upon the divine Providence, let us propose to our consideration the practice of Abraham; wherein we may see the father of the faithful leaving a most pleasant country, the place of his nativity, and questionless most dear unto him under that notion; deserting his home and fixed habitation, his estate and patrimony, his kindred and acquaintance, to wander he knew not where in unknown lands, with all his family, leading an uncertain and ambulatory life in tents, sojourning and shifting among strange people, devoid of piety and civility, (among Canaanites and Egyptians;) upon a bare confidence in the Divine protection and guidance: we may see him, aged ninety-nine years, sensible of his own natural impotence, and an equal incapacity in his consort as to such purposes, yet with a steady belief assuring himself, that from those dead stocks a numerous progeny should spring, and that he, who by all power of nature was unable to beget one child, should, by virtue of God's omnipotent word, become the father of a mighty nation: we may see him, upon the first summons of the Divine command, without scruple or hesitancy, readily and cheerfully yielding up his only son (the sole ground of his hope and prop of his family, to whose very person the promise of multiplication was affixed) to be sacrificed and slain; not objecting to his own reason the palpable inconsistency of counsels so repugnant, nor anxiously labouring to reconcile the seeming contrariety between the Divine promises and commands; but resolved as it were (with an implicit faith in God) to believe things incredible, and to rely upon events impossible: contemplating these things, let us say what discourse could so livelily describe the nature of true faith, as this illustrious precedent doth.

Again, he that would learn how to demean himself in resisting the assaults of temptation, let him consider that one carriage of Joseph; of him, together withstanding the courtships of an attractive beauty, and rejecting the solicitations of an imperious mistress, advantaged by opportunities of privacy and solitude; when the refusal was attended with extreme danger, and all the mischiefs which the disdain of a furious lust disappointed, of an outrageous jealousy provoked, of a loving master's confidence abused, could produce; and all this by one of meanest condition, in a strange place, where no intercession, favour, or patronage of friends, could be had, no equal examination of his cause might be expected; of him doing this, merely upon principles of conscience, and out of fear of God (saying, *How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?*) and he that considers this example, how can he be ignorant of his duty in the like case?

Again, would we learn wisdom, constancy, and resolution in the conduct of honest and worthy designs, let us set before our eyes the pattern of Moses, and therein take notice, how he, obeying Divine instinct and direction, having embraced that noble purpose of rescuing his countrymen from the Egyptian bondage, of settling them in a method of happy policy, and of bringing them into the promised land of their enjoyment, did behave himself in the execution thereof; with how indefatigable industry he solicited their cause with a fickle and deceitful, stupid and hard-hearted king; enduring frequent disappointments and repulses, together with furious storms of anger, and most terrible menaces from him: how having there surmounted all obstacles, and effectually enlarged the people from their restraint in Egypt, he led them on foot through a valley encompassed with mountains of sea; and after that undertook a tedious march (a march of forty years) through a wild, barren, and dry solitude (where no water was but such as issued from the stony bowels of a rock; no food, or means of subsistence, but such as was supplied by the miraculous purveyance of Heaven), in the meanwhile resisting the continual invasions of open enemies, in great numbers with armed violence striving to obstruct his passage and defeat his purpose; having also (which was more) his patience constantly exercised in supporting the froward perverseness of a most incredulous and intractable people, which took all occasions of complaint and mutiny against him; in contesting with the factious rivality of envious nobles, who repined at his successes, and maligned his authority among them; in bearing the indiscreet and untoward prevarica-

tions of his own most intimate friends and nearest relations, complying with the wicked humours and desires of the people; in sustaining many other perplexities and crosses; all which notwithstanding, he with insuperable resolution happily achieved his glorious undertaking: and will not this example, attentively regarded, beyond the power of any other means or method, explain to us the way of industry, courage, and perseverance in good and worthy, though high and difficult enterprises?

One instance more, and that of all most pertinent to our occasion: Would you be instructed how faithfully to discharge the ministerial, or any other office? With a steadfast attention, then, behold the excellent pattern of St. Paul; consider how in all his designs he zealously and singly aimed at the honour and service of God, neglecting his own safety, quiet, credit, and all worldly accommodations, for the advancement of them; how affectionately he tendered the good and welfare of those, the care of whose spiritual condition was commended to him, using all his skill, care, and strength in promoting their edification; declaring himself for their good to be content, not only for a time to be absent from the Lord, being deprived of that happiness which he otherwise impatiently groaned for, and was fully assured of; but desirous, as it seems, to be secluded for ever from his blissful presence, by a dreadful *anathema*, for their sake: how prudently, meekly, and humbly, he demeaned himself toward them; becoming all things to all men, forming himself into all allowable shapes and colours; undergoing all sorts of censure and imputations of a (despicable, an ignorant, a foolish person;) tempering his speech and deportment to their capacities and needs, bearing their miscarriages, and complying with their weaknesses; parting freely with his own just liberty, pleasure, and satisfaction, for their spiritual advantage: how generously he despised his own profit and ease, refusing that supply he might with all reason and equity have required from them; choosing to maintain himself with the labour of his own hands, and the sweat of his brows, that he might render the gospel nowise burdensome or offensive to them: how vigilantly and courageously he withstood the mischievous endeavours of false brethren, and treacherous seducers; earnestly contending for the church's peace and quiet against factious spirits, and for the substantial truths of the gospel against the pernicious devices of heretics and false teachers: how patiently he sustained all manner of pains, griefs, travels, wants, losses, hazards, distresses, disappointments, affronts, and reproaches, for the honour of God, the benefit of his spiritual children, the discharge of his duty, and satisfaction of his conscience: these things, I say, regard, and then tell me, if he might not reasonably inculcate this admonition, *Imitate me;* and if his example be not of rare use to instruct us, how faithfully we should in our respective charges and employments demean ourselves. I might in like manner instance how excellent a rule of devotion the practice of the royal prophet may be unto us; how Elias's practice might teach us to be zealous champions for truth and righteousness; how they who would be good judges, or honest patriots, may receive direction from the carriage of Samuel, Daniel, and Nehemiah.* But I proceed to say, that further,

II. Good examples do not only inform, but they persuade and incline our reason to good practice, commending it to us by plausible authority; a way of reasoning the most plain, easy, and suitable to all men's capacities; less subject to error and doubt than any other in particular cases; whereby as it is always more easy to know what is good and fit, so commonly it is most safe; there being few, who can so well discern what is good, as they may rest in the judgments of others. For that wise and virtuous persons do any thing, is a very probable argument that we are obliged and concerned to do the like; seeing such persons may in all their actions be supposed to have an unbiassed regard to the rules of truth and justice. He, therefore, who can say, that Abraham, or David, or St. Paul, did so in such a case, supposeth that he hath no small

* Ὑπομονῆς οὖν διδάσκαλος ἄριστος ὁ τοῦ μακαρίου Ἰὼβ βίος, ἀνεξικακίας ὁ τοῦ Μωσέως, πραότητος ὁ τοῦ Δαβίδ, &c. Chrys. tom. v. p. 656.

reason to do the like; it is accounted pardonable, yea, almost commendable, to err with such persons; because it is done with good appearance of reason, seeing such persons were themselves unlikely to err: *Will you* (saith Cicero*) *commemorate to me Scipio's, and Cato's, and Lælius's, and say they did the same thing! Though the thing displease me, yet I cannot withstand the authority of such men: their authority is so great, that it can cover even the suspicion of a fault.* It is obvious in temporal concernments, how great a stroke this way of discourse hath; how boldly men adventure their dearest interests in following such, whom they probably deem honest, and able to guide them: for instance, in travelling, if one being ignorant or doubtful of his way happen to meet a person, whom he conceives able, and nowise concerned or disposed to mislead him, he without scruple follows him, and confidently relies on his direction. In like manner, all good men, in the way of virtuous practice tending directly toward happiness (our common journey's end), it being their design, their interest, and their endeavour, not to mistake the way, not to deflect from the right and nearest course thereto, men are apt to think it reasonable and safe to accompany in their progress, or to press after them in their steps: and surely, next to a clear and certain rule, there is not any more rational warrant for practice, and consequently no better inducement thereto, than such good precedents. Further,

III. Examples do incite our passions, and impel them to the performance of duty. They raise hope, they inflame courage, they provoke emulation, they urge upon modesty, they awaken curiosity, they affect fancy, they set in motion all the springs of activity. It may not be amiss to show how, particularly,

1. They raise hope, by discovering to us and assuredly proving the feasibleness of matters propounded, or the possibility of success in undertaking good designs, and that by the best and most convincing of arguments, experience. Nothing so depresseth hope and advanceth despondency, as an apprehension of impossibility, or, which is equivalent thereto, an extreme difficulty (appearing to surmount our present forces) in the business to be attempted: of such a conceit desperation seemeth a reasonable consequence. For, *τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἐφίεσθαι μανικὸν, it is a madness to aim at impossibilities*;† and such, considering the great infirmity of human nature, its strong propensions to evil, and averseness from good, together with the manifold impediments and allurements objecting themselves in the way of good practice, all duties as barely represented in precepts, and pressed by rational inducements, might seem to be, if good example did not clearly demonstrate them to be possible, yea sometimes facile; even those, which upon a superficial view do seem most difficult, and insuperable by our weak endeavour. The stoical doctrine, which described a fine and stately portraiture of virtue, and inculcated very strict rules (a close following of God and nature, a perfect victory over self, the subduing all passions, and overruling all corporeal appetites; an entire freedom, composure, and tranquillity of mind; a total indifferency in respect of fortune and all external events, with the like duties, rarely practised, although, upon all accounts, acknowledged conformable to reason), was therefore by most rejected as useless, or exploded as ridiculous, as being presumed to propound matters purely imaginary and unpractiable; yet he that had seen this doctrine in great measure exemplified by Zeno, the first master of it, would have had no such reason to contemn it, nor to despair of practising according to it, if he would seriously endeavour it: exemplified, I say, by Zeno, whereof we have an illustrious testimony from a solemn decree of the Athenians: *ἐπειδὴ Ζήνων Μνασέου*, &c. Laert. in Zen. *Whereas Zeno, the son of Mnaseas the Cittican, having many years professed philosophy in this city, and as well in all other things hath demeaned himself like a good man, as particularly exhorting the young men, who went to be instructed by him, hath provoked them to virtue and*

* Africanos mihi, et Catones, et Lælios commemorabis, et eos fecisse idem dices. quamvis res mihi non placeat, tamen contra hominum auctoritatem probare non potuero. Magna est hominum auctoritas, et etiam tanta, ut delicti suspicionem tegere possit.—*Cic. in Verr.* iii.

† Chrys. tom. i. p. 69.

sobriety; withal exhibiting his own life a pattern of the best thing answerable to the discourses he used to make; it is therefore auspiciously decreed by the people, that Zeno the son of Mnaseas be solemnly praised and crowned (*according to the usage*) *with a golden crown; and that a monument be erected for him at the public charge in the Ceramicum* (the place where those were interred who had bravely exposed their lives for public defence.) This was indeed a noble attestation and a comely respect exhibited to a virtuous conversation; making in some measure a satisfaction for the heinous affront done thereto, when, instead of honouring it with a crown, they rewarded it with a cup of poison, given to the excellent Socrates. Suitably to which testimony, Seneca saith of Cleanthes, that his virtuous practice depended more upon the observation of Zeno's life than the information of his doctrine: *Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si eum tantummodo audisset: vitæ ejus interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illum an ex formula sua viveret. Cleanthes* (saith he) *had not so nearly resembled Zeno, if he had only attended to his discourses: he was present to his life, he took notice of his private carriage, he observed whether his practice did suit to his doctrine.* So that stoicism itself, which speaketh such prodigies, was, it seems, founded not only upon big words, the issues of a speculative fancy, but more upon the good practice of its first master and institutor. And indeed, he that would effectually persuade the undertaking of any enterprise, must either suppose it, or prove it effectable; and the most easy, the most evident way of proving it is by example. *Men* (saith Pliny, junior, well) *are better instructed by examples, which have in them chiefly this advantage, that they do prove the things may be done which they enjoy.* And, *human infirmity* (saith Salvian to the same purpose) *requires the assistance of example, that it may more easily now perform that which it knows others to have done; all posterity being admonished by hearing that what hath once been done, may be done again.* And, *the example* (saith St. Bernard) *of a work done is a lively and efficacious oration, easily persuading what we intend, by proving that feasible, which we strive to persuade unto.** Upon which score we therefore are exceedingly obliged to those holy men, who by their practice have assured us, that the highest duties exacted of us by our religion (the mortification of unreasonable desires, the suppression of irregular passions, the loving and blessing our enemies, the renouncing worldly vanities and pleasures, the rejoicing in afflictions, the voluntary abdication of our estates in some cases, yea, exposing life itself to inevitable hazard and loss), are not chimerical propositions of impossible performances; but duties (if we shall seriously and vigorously apply our endeavours to them, and suffer hopes to be elevated by their example) really practicable. Piety, abstractly viewed in precept, may seem an airy project, a name, a notion; but it being seen in example will prove a matter substantial, true, and feasible. A direct and pure speculation thereof may dazzle our sight, and dash our hopes; but as being reflected from persons practising it, we may bear its lusture, and hope to attain it.

2. Examples do inflame courage. So the apostle to the Hebrews signifieth, when to this purpose he intimateth, that he mentioned and setteth before them the examples of the patriarchs; that he thereby might excite their courage, and cause them resolutely to undertake that obedience, and patiently to undergo those afflictions, which they performed and sustained; *that,* (saith he) *ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*[1] For that heat and active spirit, which in some degree resideth in all men's breasts, is by example kindled, as one flame is kindled by the contact or approach of another. How many persons, timorous and averse from danger-

* Melius homines exemplis docentur, quæ imprimis hoc boni habent, quæ approbant, quæ præcipiunt fieri posse.—*Plin. Jun. Paneg.*

Adjuvari se exemplis exoptat humana infirmitas, quo facilius ipsa nunc faciat, quæ alios fecisse ante cognoscat; dum admonetur auditu ætas omnis fieri posse, quod factum est.—*Salv. ad Eccl. Cath.*

Sermo quidam vivus et efficax exemplum operis est, facile persuadens quod intendimus, dum factibile probat esse quod suademus.—*Bern. de Resur. Serm.* iii.

Ex aliorum factis fieri posse credunt, quod forte cum putant fieri non posse pigrescunt.—*Cyp. Ep.* l. ii. 2.

[1] Heb. vi. 12

ous undertakings, have notwithstanding become very bold and adventurous in war, by the discipline and influence of an exemplary valour! It is Plutarch's observation concerning Cæsar's soldiers, that they who in service under other commanders did not exceed the ordinary rate of courage, nor excel their fellows, did yet when he led them become irresistibly valiant, being animated and inspired by his unparalleled gallantry :* and who is there indeed so incurably heartless, so desperately sluggish or stupid, whom the sight of a valiant leader marching before into the mouth of danger, will not infuse fire and vigour into, and instigate forward into a participation of brave adventure? So example doth by a kind of contagion insinuate courage, or inveigle men thereunto; beside that it is a kind of daring, and proclaimeth him a dastard that will not imitate it; which imputation the lowest courage of man can hardly digest, and will therefore, by doing somewhat answerable, strive to decline it.

3. Again: Examples provoke emulation;† which is another strong principle of activity; moving us earnestly to desire, and thence eagerly to pursue, whatever good, privilege, or advantage, we see another to enjoy. To observe another of the same nature and capacities with ourselves to have shone with an illustrious virtue, to be consecrated to posterity by a lasting fame, and to be crowned with glorious rewards above; what other reflections of thought can it produce in us, than such as these?—Shall he, a man like myself, endued with the same faculties, appetites, and passions; subject to the same infirmities, temptations, needs, cares, and encumbrances of life; shall he, by noble dispositions of soul, and worthy performances, render himself highly considerable; while I, by sordid qualities and unworthy practices, debase and render myself despicable? Shall he leave behind him monuments of eternal praise, while I do nothing worthy of regard or memory? Shall he enjoy the favour of the great God, and the comforts of a blessed eternity, but I be wholly deprived of that joyful estate, and plunged into endless sorrows and desperate misery? Shall a Joseph stoutly resist and overcome the strongest temptations, and I be easily baffled by the least solicitation of vice? Shall a stripling David gloriously triumph over giants, while I basely am vanquished by dwarfs? Shall Job be stripped of all his goods with contentedness, and endure the most grievous pains with patience, while I am discomposed for any small loss, and dismayed by the least cross accident? Shall Abraham here, by his faith and obedience, attain to be called the friend of God, and rest forever in his glorious and happy bosom, while I deservedly am refused the honour and comfort of that heavenly communion here, and shall hereafter be cast out from that blissful presence, into the dismal mansions of wretched folly and wickedness? Did Paul, once a stubborn Jew, a blind Pharisee, a grievous blasphemer, a bloody persecutor, by a seasonable conversion repair his state, approve himself to God by an eminent zeal for his glory, undergo restless pains, run desperate hazards and endure all sorts of distresses, for the propagation of God's heavenly truth, obtaining thence a never-fading crown of glory in heaven, and a perpetual renown upon earth? and shall I then, who from my youth have been educated in the most true and holy religion, who have by solemn engagements devoted myself thereto, who may without any trouble or danger profess and practise according to that holy discipline, proceed in wicked courses, provoking God's wrath, and attracting his vengeance upon me? No: since the capacities are alike, since the means are common, since the rewards of piety are promiscuously exposed and offered unto all, why should I, by deplorable perverseness or negligence, suffer myself to be deprived of it and its benefits? Why shall not I become as good, as commendable, as happy as any other man? These are the conceits and voices of natural emulation, that mighty passion (so often and by many effects it discovereth itself to be) implanted in our original constitution to be as a spur and incentive, stimulating and inflaming us unto the ready undertaking and vigor-

* ——Fortis in armis
Cæsareis Labienus erat.

† Chrys. tom. i. p. 77; tom. vi. p. 148; tom. v. Orat. 101.
Φύσει γὰρ φιλόκαλον οὖσαν τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰδὼς ὁ Κύριος, &c.

ous pursuit of good purposes; the which, perhaps, hath produced more noble effects than any other passion or inclination of our souls: for all manner of excellency in knowledge, in prowess, in virtue, how often doth it issue from this source! Doth not the admired fame of men notable for learning (recorded in story, or subject to present observation), and a jealousy of being surpassed in accomplishments competent to human nature, sharpen the appetite, and rouse the industry of most scholars, whom neither the love of knowledge nor its apparent usefulness could anywise persuade to bear so much toil in acquist thereof?* Do not all histories acquaint us, that the most gallant enterprises and exploits of famous warriors have derived their beginning from an emulation of the glory purchased by their ancestors? (wisdom and valour have thus especially been propagated; one man's signal excellency being parent to the like in many others.) And that this passion may in like manner be subservient to the production of virtue and piety, is plain enough from parity of reason, and from experience; and we have, (for further argument thereof) the apostle's practice using it to this purpose: St. Paul employed it as an engine for the conversion of his dear countrymen; whom, by raising in them a jealousy of being outstripped, in God's favour and its effects, by the Gentiles, he endeavoureth to provoke to the embracing of the Christian faith: *I speak to you Gentiles*, saith he, *inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office*, εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα, *if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*[m] And St. James instigateth us unto fervency of prayer, by minding us, that *Elias was a man of like passions with ourselves;*[n] yet was able by his prayers to shut and open heaven, to procure barrenness and fertility to the earth. And the apostle to the Hebrews chargeth us, *to consider one another*, εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης, καὶ καλῶν ἔργων, *so as to provoke one another* (or by mutual emulation to sharpen one another) *to charity and good works.*

4. Examples do work upon modesty, *that preserver and guardian of virtue*, as Cicero calls it.* For every good action of another doth upbraid, reproach, and shame him who acteth not conformably thereto. Can we without a trembling heart, and blushing forehead, view the practices of the ancient saints, if ours be altogether unlike them? If they, to please God and secure their salvation, did undergo such prodigious pains in assiduous devotions, abstinences, watchings, and we contrariwise are extremely sluggish, cold, and negligent in the performance of our ordinary duties; if they willingly renounced all sensual complacencies, and we either cherish ourselves in a soft delicacy of life, or wallow in a profane dissolution of manners; if they, to free themselves from distracting cares, voluntarily disburdened themselves of all needless encumbrances, and we are wholly busy in heaping up wealth, and driving on worldly interests; if they gladly embraced and endured the sharpest afflictions, and we are terrified by the thought, are overwhelmed by the sense of the least disappointment or distasteful occurrence; how can we without extreme regret of mind, and confusion of face, consider their practice, or compare it with ours? It is a profligate impudence of him that can daily hear and read the stories of their doings, without being deeply sensible, and ashamed at the dissonance appearing between their course of life and his.

5. Example awakens that curiosity, which is natural to us, and of no mean efficacy upon our actions. For whatever we see done, we are apt to be inquisitive concerning it; why and to what purpose it is done, what the grounds are, and what the fruits of the performance; especially if the matter seem considerably important, and the action proceedeth from a person deserving respect; whereof having passed some competent judgment, we are by the same instinct of curiosity further transported into a desire of discerning by our trial and experience

* Tentanda via est, qua me quoque possim Tollere humo.

[m] Rom. xi. 13, 14; x. 19.

[n] James v. 17.

* Custos omnium virtutum, dedecus fugiens, laudemque maxime consequens verecundia est. —*Cic. Part. Rhet.*

whether the event correspondeth to our expectation; so are we easily induced to imitate the actions of others. By which means, as vice ordinarily is conceived and propagated (men by a preposterous and perverse curiosity being inveigled to try what they see others effect or enjoy), so may virtue also by the same means be engendered and nourished; the general ways of producing and maintaining those contrary habits being alike. As, therefore, it is a great blemish and reproach to human nature, that,

——Faciles imitandis
Turpibus et pravis omnes sumus—*Juvenal.*

we (as the satirist truly observeth of us) *have a great proclivity to follow naughty example;* so there is from hence some amends, that we have also some inclination to imitate good and worthy precedents; the which is somewhat more strong and vigorous, because countenanced and encouraged by the approbation of reason, our most noble faculty.

6. Examples also do please the mind and fancy in contemplation of them, thence drawing a considerable influence upon practice. No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as history, or the tradition of remarkable examples: even those who have an abhorrency or indisposition toward other studies (who have no genius to apprehend the more intricate subtleties of science, nor the patience to pursue rational consequences), are yet often much taken with historical narrations: these, striking them with a delectable variety of accidents, with circumstantial descriptions, and sensible representations of objects, do greatly affect and delight their fancies; especially the relation of notable adventures and rare accidents is wont to be attended with great pleasure and satisfaction. And such are those which present to us the lives and examples of holy men, abounding with wonders of providence and grace: no attempts so gallant, no exploits so illustrious, as those which have been achieved by the faith and patience, by the prudence and courage, of the ancient saints; they do far surpass the most famous achievements of pagan heroes. It was, I dare say, more wonderful, that Abraham with his retinue of household servants should vanquish four potent and victorious kings; and that Gideon with three hundred unarmed men should discomfit a vastly numerous host; than that Alexander with a well-appointed army of stout and expert soldiers should overturn the Persian empire. The siege of Jericho is so far more remarkable than those most famous ones of Numantia and Saguntus, as it is more strange that the blast of trumpets and the noise of people shouting should demolish walls, than the shaking them with rams, or discharging massy stones against them. And he that carefully will compare the deeds of Samson and Hercules, shall find, that one true exploit performed by the former doth much in force and strangeness surmount the twelve fabulous labours of the other: no triumphs, indeed, are comparable to those of piety; no trophies are so magnificent and durable, as those which victorious faith erecteth: that history therefore, which reports the *res gestæ*, the acts and sufferings of most pious men, must in reason be esteemed not only the most useful, but also the most pleasant; yielding the sweetest entertainment to well-disposed minds; wherein we see virtue expressed, not in bare idea only, but in actual life, strength, motion; in all its beauty and ornaments: than which no spectacle can be more stately; no object more grateful can be presented to the discerning eye of reason.

7. We may furthermore consider, that God hath provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect standard of good practice; the example of our Lord: the which declareth the use and efficacy of good example, as one principal instrument of piety. That indeed is the most universal, absolute, and assured pattern; yet doth it not supersede the use of other examples: not only the valour and conduct of the general, but those of inferior officers, yea, the resolution of common soldiers, do serve to animate their fellows. The stars have their season to guide us, as well as the sun; especially when our eyes are so weak, as hardly to bear the day. Even, considering our infirmity, inferior examples by their imperfection sometime have a peculiar advantage. Our Lord's most imitable practice did proceed from an immense virtue of divine grace, which we cannot arrive to; it in itself is so perfect and

high, that we may not ever reach it; looking upon it may therefore sometime dazzle and discourage our weakness: but other good men had assistances in measure, such as we may hope to approach unto; they were subject to the difficulties which we feel; they were exposed to the perils of falling which we fear: we may therefore hope to march on in a reasonable distance after them; we may, by help of the same grace, come near in transcribing their less exact copy.

To conclude: Since upon so many accounts we are obliged to follow good examples; since they are of so great use toward our proceeding in the way to happiness; thence they conduce to the clear instruction of our understanding, to the forcibly inclining our reason, to the vehement excitement of our passions, to the delightfully affecting our imagination in subserviency to good practice; let us make that due and profitable use of them, which we should and may do. Let us, with diligent attention perusing the sacred history, meditate upon the lives of holy men therein propounded as patterns of a persevering faith in God, and conscionable obedience to his commandments. Let the light of their exemplary practice in all kind of piety and virtue continually shine upon our souls, to direct our minds, to inflame our affections, to quicken our resolutions, to detect the errors and correct the faults of our lives, that we, imitating their virtuous and pious conversation, may partake of those comfortable rewards, of that joy and bliss whereof they rest possessed. The which God Almighty, and our blessed Saviour, the author and finisher of our faith, by his gracious aid and blessing grant unto us; to whom be all glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXV.

ABIDING IN CHRIST TO BE DEMONSTRATED BY WALKING AS CHRIST DID.

1 JOHN ii. 6.—*He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk as he walked.*

To *abide in Christ*, to *be in Christ*, to *put on Christ;* and reciproally *Christ's being in us*, *living*, *dwelling*, *being formed in us;*[a] and the like expressions occurring in holy Scripture, do not denote any physical inherence, or essential conjunction between Christ and us (such as those who affect unintelligible mysteries, rather than plain sense, would conceit), but only that mutual relation accruing from our profession of being Christ's disciples, our being inserted into his body the church, being governed by his laws, partaking of his grace, with all the privileges of the gospel, relying upon his promises, and hoping for eternal salvation from him. By virtue of which relation, we may be said, in a mystical or moral manner, to be united to him, deriving strength and sustenance from him, as the members from the head, the branches from the tree, the other parts of the building from the foundation; by which similitudes this mysterious union is usually expressed in scripture: in effect, briefly, to be in, or to abide in Christ, implieth no more but our being truly in faith and practice Christians; so that the meaning of St. John's words seemeth plainly and simply to be this: Whoever pretends to be a Christian (that is, to believe the doctrine and embrace the discipline of Christ) ought to walk (that is, is obliged to order the whole course of his life and actions) as Christ walked (that is, as Christ did live and converse in the world:) or, it is the duty of every one professing Christianity, to conform his life to the pattern of Christ's life, to follow his example, to imitate his practice. This is the import of the words, this the subject of our present discourse.

I. For illustration and confirmation of which point, we may observe, that the holy apostles do upon all occasions assume this supposition, when they would persuade their disciples to the practice of any virtue, or performance of any duty; enforcing their exhortations, by representing the practice of Christ as an unquestionable ground of obligation, and an effectual inducement thereto. Hence they incite them to holiness: *But* (saith St. Peter) *as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of*

[a] Rom. viii. 10; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 17; Gal. iv. 19.

conversation :[b] to charity ; *And walk in love* (saith St. Paul), *as Christ also loved us :*[c] to patience ; *Because* (saith St. Peter) *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.*[d] And, *Let us* (saith the apostle to the Hebrews) *run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who that for the joy that was set before him endured the cross :*[e] to humility : *Let* (saith St. Paul) *the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation :*[f] to charitable compliance, and inoffensive demeanour toward others, intimated by St. Paul, when he says, *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved : Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ :*[g] and again, *Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification ; for even Christ pleased not himself.*[h] Thus do the apostles take all occasion, from the like practice of Christ, to persuade to the performance of duty ; and the strength of their argument lieth upon the evidence of this supposition, that all professing themselves Christians are especially obliged to imitate Christ's example. And their authority may be backed and enforced by several reasons.

II. Doing so hath a reasonableness and decency grounded upon our relations to Christ : it is fit and comely that the manners of the disciple should be regulated by those of his master ; that the servant should not, in his garb and demeanour, dissent or vary from his lord ; that the subject should conform his humour to the fashion of his prince ; especially that we should thus comply and conform to such a Master, such a Lord, such a Prince, whom (upon highest considerations) by a most voluntary choice, and in a most solemn manner, we have absolutely devoted ourselves unto : this reason our Lord doth himself uge : *Ye* (saith he to his disciples) *call me Master, and Lord ; and ye say well, for so I am : if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*[i]

III. Following Christ's example is requisite to demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love, and reverence to him. It is the most natural way of testifying affection and respect, to imitate the manners of those persons who are the objects of those acts and dispositions, to esteem what they approve, to delight in what they affect, and consequently (since actions do proceed from affections) to do as they do. Contrary actions are plain arguments of contrary judgments, inclinations, and affections. Who can imagine we sincerely believe in Christ, or heartily love him, or truly honour him, that seeth us to loathe what he liked, or affect what he detested ; to contemn what he prized, or value what he despised ; to neglect what he pursued, or embrace what he avoided ? but if our lives resemble his, any man will thence collect our respect and affection to him : this argument our Saviour doth also intimate : *By this* (saith he) *shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another ;*[j] that is, it will be an evident sign and a strong argument, that ye really do believe in, love, and honour me, if ye imitate me in my charity.

IV. By pretending to be Christians we acknowledge the transcendent goodness, worth, and excellency of our Saviour ; that he was incomparably better and wiser than any person ever was, or could be ; that he always acted with the highest reason, out of the most excellent disposition of mind, in order to the best purposes ; and that his practice, therefore, reasonably should be the rule and pattern of ours : for the best and exactest in every kind is the measure of the rest. All that would obtain exquisite skill in any art or faculty, think best to imitate the works of the best masters therein : a painter, to draw after the pieces of Zeuxis or Apelles, of Raphael or Titian ; an orator, to speak in the style of Cicero or Demosthenes ; a soldier, to emulate the military achievements of Hannibal or Cæsar : in like manner, reason requireth, if we would live well and

[b] 1 Pet. i. 15.
[c] Eph. v. 2.
[d] 1 Pet. ii. 21.
[e] Heb. xii. 1, 2.
[f] Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7.
[g] 1 Cor. x. 33 ; xi. 1.
[h] Rom. xv. 2, 3.
[i] John xiii. 13, 14.
[j] John. xiii. 35.

happily, that we should endeavour to conform our practice to that of our Saviour, the most perfect mirror of all virtue and goodness.

V. The practice of our Saviour did throughly agree with his doctrine and law; he requireth nothing of us which he did not eminently perform himself. He *fulfilled* in deed, as well as taught in word, *all righteousness*. He was not *ignava opera, philosophica sententia;* like those masters of philosophy, so frequently taxed and derided by the satirists;* who, by a horid garb, supercilious looks, and loud declamations, would seem to discountenance those vices which themselves practised; nor like those hypocritical lawyers in the gospel, who laded other men with *heavy burdens*, such as themselves would *not touch with one of their fingers:*[k] no; he imposed nothing on us which he did not first bear upon his own shoulders: the strictness of his life did in all respects correspond with the severity of his precepts, or rather did indeed much exceed them. They, therefore, who pretend to believe his doctrine, and avow themselves bound to observe his law, are consequently engaged to follow his practice, in which his doctrine and law are signally exemplified.

VI. It being the design of divine goodness, in sending our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from sin and misery, to instruct us in the knowledge and excite us to the practice of all virtue, and thereby to qualify us for the enjoyment of a blessed immortality; effecting all this in a way agreeable to our natural condition and capacity; there could not be devised any more powerful means, or more convenient method, of accomplishing those excellent purposes, than by propounding such an example, and obliging us to comply therewith; the which may appear, 1. By considering in general the advantage and efficacy that good example is apt to have upon practice; 2. By weighing the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example above all others, in order to those ends; and 3. By surveying the particular instances of imitable goodness represented in the life of our Saviour.

1. Good example is naturally an effectual instrument of good practice; for that it doth most compendiously, pleasantly, and easily instruct; representing things to be done at one view, in a full body, clothed with all their modes and circumstances; it recommends them to us by the most plain and plausible way of reasoning (and withal the most sure and safe), the authority of wise and good men; it encourageth, by evidently declaring the practicableness of rules prescribed; it kindleth and rouseth men's courage, by a kind of contagion, as one flame doth kindle another; it raiseth a worthy emulation of doing laudable things, which we see done; or of obtaining a share in the commendations and rewards of virtue. It urgeth modesty, breeding shame and regret in them who act contrarily thereto; it awakeneth curiosity, thereby producing a desire to make trial of what it proposeth; it affecteth and pleaseth the fancy, thereby insinuating an approbation, admiration, and liking of the good things which it representeth: briefly, it exciteth and engageth all our passions, setting on work all those powerful springs of activity; it consequently is, in its own nature, an efficacious mean of good practice. This we may in general say of all good example; but,

2. More especially the example of Christ doth, in efficacy and influence upon good practice, surpass all others; upon several accounts.

First, In that it is a sure and infallible rule, an entire and perfect rule of practice; deficient in no part, swerving in no circumstances from truth and right, which privileges are competent to no other example. The practice of the best men is not always to be imitated, nor ever absolutely as a certain ground of action; it is to be (so far as we have ability) considered, examined, and compared to more certain rules (the divine laws and the principles of right reason), according to their agreement with which they are to be followed: they are, indeed (before trial of the case), probable arguments of what is done by them being good and lawful; they do outweigh slender and obscure reasonings about the

* Οὐδὲν ψυχρότερον τοῦ κατὰ λόγους φιλοσοφοῦντος.—Chrys.
Ὢν τὸ βῆμα τοῦ τρόπου κατήγορον.—Naz.
[k] Luke xi. 46.

goodness of things; they may, when opportunity, leisure, or ability of further inquiry and judgment about things, are wanting, serve to direct us; but they are not thoroughly sure rules, or perfect measures of our duty. We should beware lest we be seduced even by holy persons; and, therefore, with circumspection and caution should peruse their story, and contemplate their demeanour; whereof those which are explicitly commended, or allowed by the divine judgment, we may, being assured that we are in the same circumstances, safely follow, (taking them for monitories, encouragements, and excitements to our duty:) but those that are directly condemned by the same sentence, or apparently devious from God's law, we as carefully should avoid; such as are of a doubtful and unaccountable nature, we are to suspend about, and not to ground upon;* nor to argue from the fact to the rightfulness of them; the safest way being always (as we are able) to have recourse to the simple, plain, and perspicuous precepts of God, and dictates of reason. For the best men have been always subject to errors and infirmities: the fountain of original corruption in them was never so dried up, or closely stopped, but that some impure streams have bubbled forth; the fire of natural concupiscence was never so utterly quenched, but that sometimes it would blaze, or smoke out in bad actions; that intestine enemy, the flesh, was never thoroughly subdued, nor the body of sin quite slain and mortified, in any other mortal man. Good men have ever had some foul spots, or deforming wrinkles, appearing in the beauteous face of their conversation; they have had their inequalities and indispositions of humour, their ebbs of devotion, their fits of sloth, their wanton freaks, their slips often, and sometimes their falls; they have been subject to be deluded by mistake, to be surprised by inadvertency, to be transported by passion, to be swayed by temper, to be biassed by interest, to be allured by temptation into false and unwarrantable proceedings; they might sometimes fail in the substance, oftener in the degree, in the manner, in the circumstances of action; we find them often complaining of their proneness to do amiss, bemoaning the wretched frailty of their state; yea, often repenting, and bitterly mourning for their actual transgressions: there hardly is any saint recorded in scripture, without some blemish in his actions; which shows our weakness, and engageth us to be wary. They were, indeed, endowed with sufficient competencies of divine light, and graces suitable to their private needs, or to the public exigencies of their times, places, occasions, and affairs; but not with the perfection and extreme degrees thereof, requisite to preserve them from all miscarrige; so that we are not always, or in all cases, to conform our actions to their examples: we must not learn to equivocate of Abraham; nor to circumvent of Jacob; nor to be choleric of Moses (so as in our excess of passion to break the tables of the divine law;) nor of Eli to be fondly affectionate or indulgent to our relations; nor of David to utter uncharitable imprecations; nor to dissemble of St. Peter; nor of St. Paul to revile magistrates. The use we are to make of many practices of most eminently pious men is, not to be misguided by them into wrong paths; not by them to authorize or excuse our presumptuous misdeeds; but to make us to admire and to rely upon the divine mercy, which so graciously did overlook and pardon their offences; to provoke us to an imitation of their repentance; to render us watchful in shunning those rocks, upon which persons so skilful in the conduct of their lives have dashed; to engage us to humility, by considering so manifest arguments of our frailty, and our being obnoxious to greater and more frequent miscarriages.

But as to our Saviour's example, the case is quite different: for though he did miracles as God, he commanded as Christ; he did many heroical things in discharge of his office, &c. in which things we cannot, or may not, imitate him: yet, whatever in his life was, in its own nature, imitable by us, which did not exceed our natural powers, nor disagree with our condition and quality; whatever he as man, in a private capacity, as subject to the divine law, with regard thereto, performed, we may, with all freedom, confidence, and security, imitate. Nor can so doing incur any danger of error or

* It was ill said of Seneca: Catoni ebrietas objecta est, et facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit hoc crimen, honestum, quam turpem Catonem.

guilt; for we cannot, without great folly and impiety, suspect any fault or imperfection in his most pure, righteous, and innocent life: he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners;* he was *a lamb without blemish and without spot; he was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. He did no sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth. God gave him of his Spirit not by measure.*[1] These are the voices and elogies of the sacred oracles concerning him. The heavenly extraction even of his humility derived no original contagion from our polluted stock, and rendered him free from the common incentives of evil concupiscence. The inseparable presence of the Divinity with him (*for God was with him,*[m] as St. Peter expressed it), and the unrestrained effusion of Holy Spirit upon him, did preserve him from all defilements of infectious conversation in this world; a clear evidence of divine light, always shining in his soul, directed him infallibly in the paths of truth and righteousness: no tempest of cross accidents without, nor any estuations of internal passions, could discompose the steady calm and serenity of his mind; no allurement of worldly pleasure, nor temptation of profit, could pervert his practice, or seduce his heart; being inflamed with most intense love of God, and entire charity to men: so that his example must needs be a perfect rule and sure direction to us. Which consideration cannot but yield great encouragement and comfort in follwing him; freeing us from all anxious doubt and suspicion of mistake in our spiritual progress; like the presence of a sure guide to the bewildered traveler; like the appearance of a star to the weather-beaten mariner; like that miraculous pillar of fire, which safely conducted the wandering Israelites through the unknown and unfrequented passages of a wild desert. But further,

Secondly, The peculiar excellency of our Lord's example appears, in that he was, by the divine Providence, to this very purpose designed, and sent into the world, as well by his practice as by his doctrine, to be the guide and master of holy life and obedience to all men; and did accordingly propound to himself this end of his actions, that he might be imitated by his disciples. So he declareth himself as to some considerable passages of his life; and thence, by reasonable inference, we may suppose the same of the rest, so far as they might be conducible to the same end; especially since, of some performances, no other, or no so probable, account can be given, as that they were done for exemplarity: for why should he fast, who had no sins to be repented of, no rebellious flesh to be tamed, no intemperate desires to be mortified, no coldness of devotion to be enlivened thereby?* And why did he offer himself to be baptized, who had no original stain to be cleansed of, no fault to be forgiven, no want of special grace to be conferred? Why, but, by his exemplary fulfilling all righteousness, to teach us ready obedience to all divine institutions, and peaceable compliance with all laudable customs? So an ancient writer wisely descanteth upon those practices of our Saviour: *He was* (saith that writer) *baptised, and fasted, not because he had need of any cleansing or fasting, who in nature was pure and holy; but that he might attest to the truth of St. John, and might exhibit a pattern to us.*† What induced him to condescend to such a misbeseeming employment, to appearance, as the washing of his disciples' feet, he doth himself tell us: *If I then* (saith he) *your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you.* This was his professed scope and drift, in that admirable deportment of his, to teach us humility, charity, and condescension toward the meanest of our brethren. What did those exuberant instances of charity, practised by him, import? This especially, that we should imitate them: hither he drives them: *this* (saith he) *is my commandment, that ye love one another,*

[1] Heb. vii. 26; 1 Pet. i. 19; Heb. iv. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 22; John iii. 34.

[m] Acts x. 38.

* Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἐνήστευσεν, οὐκ αὐτὸς ταύτης δεόμενος, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς παιδεύων.—Chrys. tom. ii. p. 81.

† Ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ἐνήστευσεν οὐκ αὐτὸς ἀπορυπώσεως, ἢ νηστείας χρείαν ἔχων, ἢ καθάρσεως, ὁ τῇ φύσει καθαρὸς καὶ ἅγιος, ἀλλ' ἵνα Ἰωάννῃ ἀλήθειαν προσμαρτυρήσῃ, καὶ ἡμῖν ὑπογραμμὸν παράσχηται

as I have loved you.[n] Why was he in his disposition so meek and gentle, in his conversation so humble and lowly? To this purpose, that we might of him learn those excellent qualities; *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am meek and lowly in heart.* And St. Peter saith, *That Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps;*[o] signifying that he designed his patience to be exemplary to us. If, then, our Saviour, in his humility, his charity, his meekness, his patience, intended his life to be exemplary, and expressly propounded it as such; then certainly in his devotion, his self-denial, his justice, in all other virtues, he had the same intention: and what he intended, God designed to be; and what God designed to be, was doubtless eminently conducible to the end designed; and therefore our Saivour's life was most exemplary. Other saints, indeed, were of very exemplary conversation; but either proved to be so according to ordinary course of Providence, without any peculiar designation thereto (their free choice conspiring with God's grace in producing good works shining before men), or at most by a restrained determination to some particular time, place, or people; as Moses was chosen and appointed to conduct the Israelites: *David was taken from the sheepfold, and following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob God's people, and Israel his inheritance;*[p] Jeremy was sanctified from his birth, and ordained to be a prophet of the nations in his times; and St. Paul was separated from the womb to be a preacher of the Christian faith: these, and such like eminent persons, Almighty God, in his goodness, was pleased to raise up, to be, in their generations, as it were, partial and temporary saviours, as by declaring his will, and revealing his truth to men, so by guiding them with a remarkable example: these *burning and shining lamps*[q] (as St. John the baptist is called) were indeed like lamps set up in some particular families, with a competent lustre, to dispel the present darkness, shining within their definite sphere, and for a determinate time: but our Saviour, like the sun, fixed in a higher orb, was ordained with a perpetual and confined splendour to illuminate the universe, to cause a general and everlasting day of healthful and comfortable knowledge over the face of the whole earth. He was *that true light, which enlighteneth every man coming into the world; He was prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the nations:*[r] (not Israel only, but the *nations* indefinitely, or all nations.) He was ordained, not commander of a single regiment or party, but captain-general of all mankind, to conduct all those who were disposed to follow him, by a victorious obedience, into that triumphant estate of everlasting joy and happiness.[s] His example doth belong unto us all, without exception, by divine ordination; for *we*, all of us, *were* (to use St. Paul's expression) *predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son: that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*[t] So it was, and so it became the infinite goodness and philanthrophy of God, to bestow upon mankind one perfectly good example, inviting to all virtue, and so fit to countervail all those many bad ones where with we converse, enticing to vice; to set forth, among so many imperfect ones, one accomplished piece of his heavenly workmanship, able to attract the eyes and ravish the hearts of all men with admiration of its excellent worth and beauty;[u] to offer to our view some discernible representation of his invisible perfections; that so we might better be induced and inured to apprehend, love, reverence, and imitate himself, by contemplation of that most exquisite image of him; to give an evident proof that the highest virtue is not unpracticable, that human nature, by aid and guidance of the divine Spirit, may arrive to the sublimest pitch of perfection in goodness: in fine, to expose such a common, sweet, and lovely pattern, as we with assurance, joy, and comfort may follow.

Thirdly, Our Saviour's example is especially influential upon practice, in that it was, by an admirable temperament,

[n] John xv. 12.
[o] Matt. xi. 29; 1 Pet. ii. 21.
[p] Acts vii. 35, Psal cvi. 23; lxxviii. 70, 71; Jer. i. 5.
[q] John v. 35,—Λυχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων.
[r] John i. 9; Luke ii. 31, 32.
[s] Heb. ii. 10.
[t] Rom. viii. 29.
[u] John v. 19,—Ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ.

more accomodated for imitation than any others have been; that the perfect copy of his most holy life seems more easy to be transcribed, than the ruder draughts of other holy men: for though it were written with an incomparable fairness, delicacy and evenness; not slurred with any foul blot, not anywhere declining from exact straightness; yet were the lineaments thereof exceedingly plain and simple; not by any gaudy flourishes, or impertinent intrigues, rendered difficult to studious imitation; so that even women and children, the weakest and meanest sort of people, as well as the most wise and ingenious, might easily perceive its design, and with good success write after it. His was a gentle and steady light, bright indeed, but not dazzling the eye; warm, but not scorching the face of the most intent beholder; no affected singularities, no supercilious morosities, no frivolous ostentations of seemingly high, but really fruitless performances; nothing that might deter a timorous, discourage a weak, or offend a scrupulous disciple, is observable in his practice: but, on the contrary, his conversation was full of lowliness and condescension, of meekness and sweetness, of openness and candid simplicity; apt to invite and allure all men to approach toward it, and with satisfaction to enjoy it. He did not seclude himself into the constant retirements of a cloister, nor into the further recesses of a wilderness (as some others have done), but conversed freely and indifferently with all sorts of men, even the most contemptible and odious sort of men, *publicans* and *sinners;* like the sun, with an impartial bounty liberally imparting his pleasant light and comfortable warmth to all. He used no uncouth austerities in habit or diet; but complied, in his garb, with ordinary usage, and sustained his life with such food as casual opportunity did offer; so that his indifferency in that kind yielded matter of obloquy against him from the fond admirers of a humorous preciseness. His devotions (though exceedingly sprightful and fervent) were not usually extended to a tedious and exhausting durance, nor strained into ecstatical transports, charming the natural senses, and overpowering the reason; but calm, steady, and regular, such as persons of honest intention and hearty desire (though not endued with high fancy, or stirring passion) might readily imitate. His zeal was not violent or impetuous, except upon very great reason, and extraordinary occasion, when the honour of God, or good of men, was much concerned. He was not rigorous in the observance of traditional rites and customs (such as were needlessly burdensome, or which contained in them more of formal show than of real fruit), yet behaved himself orderly and peaceably, giving due respect to the least institution of God, and complying with the innocent customs of men; thereby pointing out unto us the middle way between peevish superstition and boisterous faction; which, as always the most honest, so commonly is the most safe and pleasant way to walk in. He delighted not to discourse of sublime mysteries (although his deep wisdom comprehended all), nor of subtile speculations and intricate questions, such as might amuse and perplex, rather than instruct and profit his auditors; but usually did feed his auditors with the most common and useful truths, and that in the most familiar and intelligible language; not disdaining the use of vulgar sayings and trivial proverbs, when they best served to insinuate his wholesome meaning into their minds. His whole life was spent in exercise of the most easy and pleasant, yet most necessary and substantial, duties; obedience to God, charity, meekness, humility, patience, and the like; the which, that he might practice with the greatest latitude, and with most advantage for general imitation, he did not addict himself to any particular way of life, but disentangled himself from all worldly care and business; choosing to appear in the most free, though very mean condition; that he might indifferently instruct, by his example, persons of all callings, degrees, and capacities; especially the most, that is, the poor; and might have opportunity, in the face of the world, to practice the most difficult of necessary duties; lowliness, contentedness, abstinence from pleasure, contempt of the world, sufferance of injuries and reproaches. Thus suited and tempered by divine wisdom was the life of our blessed Saviour, that all sorts of men might be in an equal capacity to follow

him, that none might be offended, affrighted, or discouraged; but that all might be pleased, delighted, enamoured, with the homely majesty and plain beauty thereof. And in effect so it happened, that ordinary people (the weakest, but sincerest and unprejudiced sort of men) were greatly taken with, most admired and applauded his deportment; many of them readily embracing his doctrine, and devoting themselves to his discipline; while only the proud, envious, covetous, and ambitious *scribes* and *lawyers* rejected his excellent doctrine, scorned the heavenly simplicity and holy integrity of his life.

Fourthly, The transcendent excellency of our Lord's example appeareth, in that it is attended with the greatest obligations (of gratitude and ingenuity, of justice, of interest, of duty), mightily engaging us to follow it. For it is not the example of an ordinary or inconsiderable person, of a stranger, of one indifferent or unrelated to us; but of a glorious prince, of heavenly extraction (the first-born Son of the Almighty God, sole heir of eternal Majesty;) of our Lord and Master, to whom we are for ever bound by indispensable bands of duty and obedience; of our great Captain, who hath undertaken to subdue our enemies, and hath obliged us to follow his conduct, in a holy warfare against them, by most solemn sacraments and vows; of our best Friend, from whom we have received the greatest favours and benefits imaginable; of our most gracious Saviour, who, for our sake, hath voluntarily sustained most bitter pains and shameful contumelies; having sacrificed his dearest heart-blood to redeem us from intolerable slaveries, and from extremities of horrible misery; of him, to whom, in all respects, we do owe the highest respect, love, and observance, that can be. Now it is the nature and property both of respect and love (such as upon so many grounds we owe to him) to beget, in the person respecting and loving, and endeavour, answerable to the degrees of those dispositions, or conforming to, and resembling, the qualities and manners of the person respected or beloved. We see how readily children do comply with the customs of their parents and tutors; servants of their masters and patrons; subjects of their princes and governors, with a studious earnestness composing themselves to express in their carriage, not only their good or their indifferent fashions and manners, but even their most palpable deformities and vices; insomuch, that a whole family, a city, a nation, may be debauched from its sobriety, or reformed from its dissoluteness, even instantly, by the example of one person, who, by his place, power, and authority, challengeth extraordinary reverence from men: and much greater influence hath hearty love to transform our manners into an agreement with the manners of him we love: *What a man loves, that he imitateth so much as lies in his power*,* saith Hierocles truly. For love being founded on a good esteem, and a benevolent inclination thence resulting, engageth the affectionate person to admire the qualities of him he affecteth, to observe his deportments, to make the most advantageous construction of what he doeth; to fancy he doeth all things with best reason and discretion; to deem, therefore, that all his actions deserve and require imitation: hence doth love either find, or soon produce, a competent similitude in the parties, (a similitude of mind, of will, of inclination, and affection, an *eadem velle et nolle:*) it doth forcibly attract, as to a vicinity of place and converse, so to an agreement of affections and actions; it uniteth the most distant, it reconcileth the most opposite, it turneth the most discordant natures into a sweet consent and harmony of disposition and demeanour. We, then, having the greatest reason both to honour and love our Saviour, surely his example being duly studied and considered by us, must needs obtain a superlative influence upon our practice, and be very powerful to conform and assimilate it to his.

These considerations may suffice to show the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example in virtue, and efficacy upon our practice; the same more abundantly might be deduced from a survey of the most considerable particulars, in which we may and ought to imitate him. But the time will not suffer us to launch forth into so vast a sea of discourse. I

* Ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ τις καὶ μιμεῖται ὅσον οἷόν τε — Hier.

shall only, therefore, from the premises exhort, that if any earnest desire of happiness, any high esteem of virtue, any true affection to genuine sanctity, do lodge in our breasts, we should apply this most excellent means of attaining them; the study and endeavour of imitating the life of our Lord. If we have in us any truth and sincerity, and do not vainly prevaricate in our profession of being Christ's disciples, and votaries of that most holy institution, let us manifest it by a real conformity to the practice of him who is our Master, and Author of our faith. If we have in us any wisdom, or sober consideration of things, let us employ it in following the steps of that infallible Guide, designed by Heaven to lead us in the straight, even, and pleasant ways of righteousness, unto the possession of everlasting bliss. If we do verily like and approve the practice of Christ, and are affected with the innocent, sweet, and lovely comeliness thereof, let us declare such our mind by a sedulous care to resemble it. If we bear any honour and reverence, any love and affection to Christ; if we are at all sensible of our relations, our manifold obligations, our duties to our great Lord, our best Friend, our most gracious Redeemer; let us testify it by a zealous care to become like to him: let a lively image of his most righteous and innocent, most holy and pious, most pure and spotless life, be ever present to our fancies; so as to inform our judgments, to excite our affections, to quicken our endeavours, to regulate our purposes, to correct our mistakes, to direct, amend, and sanctify our whole lives. Let us, with incessant diligence of study, meditate upon the best of histories, wherein the tenor of his divine practice is represented to us; revolving frequently in our thoughts all the most considerable passages thereof, entertaining them with devout passions, impressing them in our memories, and striving to express them in our conversations: let us endeavour continually to walk in the steps of our Lord, and *to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;* which that we may be able to do, do thou, O blessed Redeemer, draw us; draw us by the cords of thy love; draw us by the sense of thy goodness; draw us by the incomparable worth and excellency of thy person; draw us by the unspotted purity and beauty of thy example; draw us by the merit of thy precious death, and by the power of thy holy Spirit; *Draw us*, good Lord, *and we shall run after thee.* Amen.

Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; give us grace, that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit; and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.[1] Amen.

SERMON XXXVI.

OF SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

LUKE xxii. 42.—*Nevertheless, let not my will, but thine be done.*[a]

THE great controversy, managed with such earnestness and obstinacy between God and man, is this, whose will shall take place, his or ours. Almighty God, by whose constant protection and great mercy we subsist, doth claim to himself the authority of regulating our practice and disposing our fortunes: but we affect to be our own masters and carvers; not willingly admitting any law, not patiently brooking any condition, which doth not sort with our fancy and pleasure. To make good his right, God bendeth all his forces, and applieth all proper means both of sweetness and severity (persuading us by arguments, soliciting us by entreaties, alluring us by fair promises, scaring us by fierce menaces, indulging ample benefits to us, inflicting sore correction on us, working in us and upon us by secret influences of grace, by visible dispensations of providence;) yet so it is, that commonly nothing doth avail, our will opposing itself with invincible resolution and stiffness.

Here indeed the buisness pincheth; herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consisteth, in bending *that iron sinew;* in bringing our proud hearts to stoop, and our sturdy humours to buckle, so as to surrender

[1] Coll. after Easter, 2. [a] Matt. xxvi. 39.

and resign our wills to the just, the wise, the gracious will of our God, prescribing our duty, and assigning our lot unto us. We may accuse our nature, but it is our pleasure; we may pretend weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the guilty cause of our misdemeanours; for by God's help (which doth always prevent our needs, and is never wanting to those who seriously desire it) we may be as good as we please, if we can please to be good;[b] there is nothing within us that can resist, if our wills do yield themselves up to duty: to conquer our reason is not hard; for what reason of man can withstand the infinite cogency of those motives which induce to obedience? What can be more easy, than by a thousand arguments, clear as day, to convince any man, that to cross God's will is the greatest absurdity in the world, and that there is no madness comparable thereto? Nor is it difficult, if we resolve upon it, to govern any other part or power of our nature;* for what cannot we do, if we are willing? What inclination cannot we check, what appetite cannot we restrain, what passion cannot we quell or moderate? What faculty of our soul, or member of our body, is not obsequious to our will? Even half the resolution, with which we pursue vanity and sin, would serve to engage us in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

Wherefore, in overcoming our will the stress lieth; this is that impregnable fortress, which everlastingly doth hold out against all the batteries of reason and of grace; which no force of persuasion, no allurement of favour, no discouragement of terror, can reduce: this puny, this impotent thing it is, which grappleth with Omnipotency, and often in a manner baffleth it: and no wonder, for that God doth not intend to overpower our will, or to make any violent impression on it, but only to *draw it* (as it is in the prophet) *with the cords of a man*,[c] or by rational inducements to win its consent and compliance: our service is not so considerable to him, that he should extort it from us; nor doth he value our happiness at so low a rate, as to obtrude it on us. His victory indeed were no true victory over us, if he should gain it by main force, or without the concurrence of our will; our works not being our works, if they do not issue from our will; and our will, not being our will, if it be not free: to compel it, were to destroy it, together with all the worth of our virtue and obedience: wherefore the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood, and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will otherwise than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him:* if ever we be conquered, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing ourselves: *we must take the yoke upon us;* for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his word, he attracteth us by his grace, but we must *freely come unto him.*

Our will, indeed, of all things, is most our own; the only gift, the most proper sacrifice, we have to offer; which therefore God doth chiefly desire, doth most highly prize, doth most kindly accept from us. Seeing, then, our duty chiefly moveth on this hinge, the free submission and resignation of our will to the will of God; it is this practice which our Lord (who came to guide us in the way to happiness, not only as a teacher by his word and excellent doctrine, but as a leader, by his actions and perfect example) did especially set before us, as in the constant tenor of his life, so particularly in that great exigency which occasioned these words, wherein, renouncing and deprecating his own will, he did express an entire submission to God's will, a hearty complacence therein, and a serious desire that it might take place.

For the fuller understanding of which case, we may consider that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, and *in all things* (bating sin) *like unto us*, had a natural human will, attended with senses, appetites, and affections, apt from objects incident to receive congruous impressions of pleasure and pain; so that whatever is innocently grateful and pleasant to us,

* Quodcunque sibi imperavit animus obtinuit — *Sen. de Ira*, ii. 12.

[b] Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 12, in 1 Cor. Or. 17, tom. v. Or. 28, 43.

[c] Hos. xi. 4.

* Ἐπεὶ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὰ διαβάλλει τὰ ἀγαθὰ εἰ μὴ τοιαύτη αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ φύσις, ὡς καὶ ἑκόντας προσφέρειν, καὶ χάριν ἔχειν πολλήν —Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat 2.

that he relished with delight, and thence did incline to embrace; whatever is distasteful and afflictive to us, that he resented with grief, and thence was moved to eschew: to this probably he was liable in a degree beyond our ordinary rate; for that in him nature was most perfect, his complexion very delicate, his temper exquisitely sound and fine; for so we find, that by how much any man's constitution is more sound, by so much he hath a smarter gust of what is agreeable or offensive to nature: if perhaps sometimes infirmity of body, or distemper of soul (a savage ferity, a stupid dulness, a fondness of conceit, or stiffness of humour, supported by wild opinions or vain hopes), may keep men from being thus affected by sensible objects; yet in him pure nature did work vigorously, with a clear apprehension and lively sense, according to the design of our Maker, when into our constitution he did implant those passive faculties, disposing objects to affect them so and so, for our need and advantage; if this be deemed weakness, it is a weakness connected with our nature, which he therewith did take, and *with which*, as the apostle saith, *he was encompassed.*[d] Such a will our Lord had, and it was requisite that he should have it, that he thence might be qualified to discharge the principal instances of obedience, for procuring God's favour to us, and for setting an exact pattern before us; for God imposing on him duties to perform, and dispensing accidents to endure, very cross to that natural will, in his compliance and acquiescence thereto, his obedience was thoroughly tried; his virtue did shine most brightly; therefore as the apostle saith, *he was in all points tempted;* thence, as to meritorious capacity and exemplary influence, *he was perfected through suffering.*[e]

Hence was the whole course of his life and conversation among men so designed, so modelled, as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that human will, and closing with the divine pleasure: it was predicted of him, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;* and of himself he affirmed, *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me;*[f] whereas therefore such a practice is little seen in achieving easy matters, or in admitting pleasant occurrences; it was ordered for him, that he should encounter the roughest difficulties, and be engaged in circumstances most harsh to natural apprehension and appetite; so that if we trace the footsteps of his life, from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we can hardly mark any thing to have befallen him apt to satisfy the will of nature. Nature liketh respect, and loatheth contempt; therefore was he born of mean parentage, and in a most homely condition; therefore did he live in no garb, did assume no office, did exercise no power, did meddle in no affairs, which procure to men consideration and regard; therefore an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a loose companion, a seditious incendiary, were the titles of honour and the elogies of praise conferred on him; therefore was he exposed to the lash of every slanderous, every scurrilous, every petulant and ungoverned tongue.

Nature doth affect the good opinion and good-will of men, especially when due in grateful return for great courtesy and beneficence; nor doth any thing more grate thereon, than abuse of kindness: therefore could he (the world's great Friend and Benefactor) say, *the world hateth me;*[g] therefore were those, whom he with so much charity and bounty had instructed, had fed, had cured of diseases (both corporal and spiritual), so ready to clamour, and commit outrage upon him; therefore could he thus expostulate, *Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?*[h] Therefore did his kindred slight him, therefore did his disciples abandon him, therefore did the grand traitor issue from his own bosom;[i] therefore did that whole nation which he chiefly sought and laboured to save, conspire to persecute him with most rancorous spite and cruel misusage.

Nature loveth plentiful accommodations, and abhorreth to be pinched with any want: therefore was extreme penury appointed to him; he had no revenue, no

[d] Ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περίκειται ἀσθένειαν.—Heb. v. 2.
[e] Heb. iv. 15; ii. 10, 18
[f] Heb. x. 7; Psal. xl. 7; John vi. 38; v. 30; iv. 34.
[g] John vii. 7.
[h] John x. 32.
[i] John xiii. 18.

estate, no certain livelihood, not *so much as a house where to lay his head*, or a peice of money to discharge the tax for it;[j] he owed his ordinary support to alms, or voluntary beneficence; he was to seek his food from a *fig tree on the way;* and sometimes was beholden for it to the courtesy of publicans; *δι ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, he was* (saith St. Paul) *a beggar for us.*[k]

Nature delighteth in ease, in quiet, in liberty: therefore did he spend his days in continual labour, in restless travel, in endless vagrancy, *going about and doing good;* ever hastening thither, whither the needs of men did call, or their benefit invite; therefore did he *take on him the form of a servant*, and was among his own followers *as one that ministereth;* therefore he *pleased not himself*, but suited his demeanour to the state and circumstances of things, complied with the manners and fashions, comported with the humours and infirmities of men.[l]

Nature coveteth good success to its designs and undertakings, hardly brooking to be disappointed and defeated in them: therefore was he put to water dry sticks and to wash negroes, that is, to instruct a most dull and stupid, to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation; therefore his ardent desires, his solicitous cares, his painful endeavours, for the good of men did obtain so little fruit, had indeed a contrary effect, rather aggravating their sins than removing them, rather hardening than turning their hearts, rather plunging them deeper into perdition, than rescuing them from it; therefore so much in vain did he, in numberless miraculous works, display his power and goodness, convincing few, converting fewer by them; therefore, although he taught with most powerful authority, with most charming gracefulness, with most convincing evidence, yet, *Who* (could he say) *hath believed our report?*[m] Though he most earnestly did invite and allure men to him, offering the richest boons that heaven itself could dispense, yet, *Ye will not* (was he forced to say) *come unto me, that ye may be saved:*[n] although, with assiduous fervency of affection he strove to reclaim them from courses tending to their ruin, yet how he prospered sad experience declareth, and we may learn from that doleful complaint: *How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not! οὐκ ἠθελήσατε*, your will did not concur, your will did not submit.[o]

In fine, natural will seeketh pleasure, and shunneth pain: but what pleasure did he taste? what inclination, what appetite, what sense, did he gratify? How did he feast, or revel? How but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by passing whole nights in prayer and retirement for devotion upon the cold mountains? What sports had he, what recreation did he take, but feeling incessant gripes of compassion, and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep?[p] In what conversation could he divert himself, but among those whose doltish incapacity and forward humour did wring from his patience these words, *How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?*[q] What music did he hear? What but the rattlings of clamorous obloquy, and furious accusations against him? To be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked; to be styled a king, and treated as a slave; to be spit on, to be buffeted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross; these were the delights which our Lord enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life and the notable prosperities of his fortune: such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it, or fainting under it; but proceeding on in the performance of all his duty and prosecution of his great designs with undaunted courage, with unwearied industry, with undisturbed tranquillity and satisfaction of mind.

Had indeed his condition and fortune been otherwise framed; had he come

[j] Matt. viii. 20; xvii. 25; xxi. 19; Luke viii. 3.
[k] 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[l] John iv. 6, Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35; Acts x. 38; Phil. ii. 7; Luke xxii. 27; Mark vi. 6.
[m] Luke iv. 22, 32; John xii. 38.
[n] John v. 40.
[o] Luke xiii. 34; xix. 42.
[p] Mark i. 13, 35; Luke v. 16; John iv. 6, 31; Luke vi. 12; Matt. xiv. 23; xviii. 12.
[q] Matt. xvii. 17.

into the world qualified with a noble extraction; had he lived in a splendid equipage; had he enjoyed a plentiful estate and a fair reputation; had he been favoured and caressed by men; had he found a current of prosperous success; had safety, ease, and pleasure waited on him; where had been the pious resignation of his will, where the precious merit of his obedience, where the glorious lustre of his example? How then had our frailty in him become victorious over all its enemies; how had he triumphed over the solicitations and allurements of the flesh, over the frowns and flatteries of the world, over the malice and fury of hell? How then could he have so demonstrated his immense charity toward us, or laid so mighty obligations upon us?

Such in general was the case, and such the deportment of our Lord: but there was somewhat peculiar, and beyond all this, occuring to him, which drew forth the words of our text: God had tempered for him a potion of all the most bitter and loathsome ingredients that could be; a drop whereof no man ever hath, or could endure to sip; for he was not only to undergo whatever load human rage could impose, of ignominious disgrace and grievious pain; but to feel dismal agonies of spirit, and those *unknown sufferings*,* which God alone could inflict, God only could sustain: *Behold, and see*, he might well say, *if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?*[r] He was to labour with pangs of charity, and through his heart to be pierced with deepest commiseration of our wretched case: he was to crouch under the burden of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) ever committed by mankind: he was to pass through the hottest furnace of divine vengeance, and by his blood to quench the wrath of heaven flaming out against iniquity: he was to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell, belching fire and brimstone on his face: his grief was to supply the defects of our remorse, and his suffering in those few moments to countervail the eternal torments due to us: he was to bear the hiding of God's face, and an eclipse of that favourable aspect, in which all bliss doth reside; a case which he, that so perfectly understood, could not but infinitely resent: these things with the clearest apprehension he saw coming on him; and no wonder that our nature started at so ghastly a sight, or that human instinct should dictate that petition, *Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me;* words implying his most real participation of our infirmity; words denoting the height of those sad evils which encompassed him, with his lively and lowly resentment of them; words informing us, how we should entertain God's chastisements, and whence we must seek relief of our pressures (that we should receive them, not with a scornful neglect or sullen insensibility, but with a meek contrition of soul; that we should entirely depend on God's pleasure for support under them, or releasement from them;) words which, in conjunction with those following, do show how instantly we should quash and overrule any insurrection of natural desire against the command or providence of God. We must not take that prayer to signify any purpose in our Lord to shift off his passion, or any wavering in resolution about it; for he could not anywise mean to undo that, which he knew done with God before the world's foundation; he would not unsettle that, which was by his own free undertaking and irreversible decree: he that so often with satisfaction did foretell this event, who with so *earnest desire** longed for its approach; who with that sharpness of indignation did rebuke his friend offering to divert him from it; who did again repress St. Peter's animosity with that serious expostulation, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*[s] who had advisedly laid such trains for its accomplishment, would he decline it? Could that heart, all burning with zeal for God and charity to men, admit the least thought or motion of averseness from drinking that cup, which was the sovereign medicine administered by divine wisdom for the recovery of God's creation? No: had he spake with such intent, legions of angels had flown to his rescue;[t] that word, which

* Δι' ἀγνώστων σου παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς Κύριε.—Lit. Gr.

[r] Lam. i. 12.

* Ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐπεθύμησα.—Luke xxii. 15.

[s] John xviii. 11

[t] Matt. xxvi. 53.

framed the worlds, which stilled the tempests, which ejected devils, would immediately have scattered his enemies, and dashed all their projects against him: wherefore those words did not proceed from intention, but as from instinct, and for instruction; importing, that what our human frailty was apt to suggest, that his divine virtue was more ready to smother; neither did he vent the former, but that he might express the latter.

He did express it in real effects, immediately with all readiness addressing himself to receive that unsavoury potion; he reached out his hand for it, yielding fair opportunity and advantages to his persecutors; he lifted it up to his mouth, innocently provoking their envy and malice; he drank it off with a most steady calmness and sweet composure of mind, with the silence, the simplicity, the meekness of a lamb carried to the slaughter; no fretful thought rising up, no angry word breaking forth, but a clear patience, enlivened with a warm charity, shining in all his behaviour, and through every circumstance of his passion.

Such in life, such at his death, was the practice of our Lord; in conformity whereto we also readily should undertake whatever God proposeth, we gladly should accept whatever God offereth, we vigorously should perform whatever God enjoineth, we patiently should undergo whatever God imposeth or inflicteth, how cross soever any duty, any dispensation, may prove to our carnal sense or humour.

To do thus, the contemplation of this example may strongly engage us; for, if our Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect, can we in modesty desire, to have ours? Must we be cockered and pleased in every thing, when as he was treated so coarsely, and crossed in all things? Can we grutch at any kind of service or sufferance? Can we think much (for our trial, our exercise, our correction) to bear a little want, a little disgrace, a little pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the sorest adversities?

But further to enforce these duties, be pleased to cast a glance on two considerations: 1. What the will is to which; 2. Who the willer is to whom, we must submit.

1. What is the will of God? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy, or dishonourable, any thing incommodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult or intolerably grievous, that God requireth of us to do or bear? No: he willeth nothing from us or to us, which doth not best become us and most behove us; which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solidest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second, for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

The will of God (saith St. Paul) *is our sanctification.*[n] What is that? What but that the decays of our frame, and the defacements of God's image within us, should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigour; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despicable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation, which dishonour our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and rack our conscience; that we should be endowed with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven of light, of order, of joy, and peace, dignify our nature, beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind; that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that, in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with angels, and capable of paradise.

God (saith St. Paul again) *willeth all men to be saved: he willeth not* (saith St. Peter) *that any man should perish.* He saith it himself, yea, he sweareth it,

[n] 1 Thess. iv. 3.

that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live.[v] And what is this will? what but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immoveable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God's favour, and in the light of his blissful presence; that we should be rid of all the evils to which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness and extreme woe? Such is God's will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God (how grim, how rough soever it may seem) doth tend. And do we refuse to comply with that good will; do we set against it a will of our own, affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests, things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the will that would save us, and adhere to a will that would ruin us; a foolish and a senseless will, which, slighting the immense treasures of heaven, the unfading glories of God's kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity, doth catch at specious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles; a shadow of base profit, a smoke of vain honour, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away like *the mirth of fools*, or *the crackling of thorns*,[w] leaving only soot, black and bitter, behind it?

But at least, ere we do thus, let us consider whose will it is that requireth our compliance.

It is the will of him, whose will did found the earth, and rear the heaven;[x] whose will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose will is the great law of the world, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in heaven, the blessed spirits adoring it; which swayeth in hell itself, the cursed fiends trembling at it: and shall we alone (we pitiful worms crawling on earth) presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker, who, together with all other faculties, did create and confer on us the very power of willing: and shall we turn the work of his hands, the gift of his bounty, against him?

It is the will of our Preserver, who together with all that we are or have, continually doth uphold our very will itself; so that without employing any positive force, merely by letting us fall out of his hand, he can send us and it back to nothing: and shall our will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth; without which it cannot subsist one moment, or move one step forward in action?

It is the will of our sovereign Lord, who, upon various indisputable accounts, hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us: ought we not therefore to say with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seemeth good to him*?[y] Is it not extreme iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to ourselves? Do we not manifestly incur high treason against the King of heaven, by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his sceptre into our hands, and setting our wills in his throne?

It is the will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding life or death, weal or woe unto us: and what sentence can we expect, what favour can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend, oppose that will, which is the supreme rule of justice and sole fountain of mercy?

It is the will of our Redeemer, who hath bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable captivity under most barbarous enemies, that obeying his will we might command our own, and serving him we might enjoy perfect freedom: and shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that unhappy state, bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to ourselves the benefit of so great redemption?

It is the will of our best Friend; who loveth us much better than we do love ourselves; who is concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest interest, and

[v] 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 11.
[w] Eccles. vii. 6.
[x] Psal. cxlviii. 5; Apoc. iv. 11.
[y] 1 Sam. iii. 18.

greatly delightest therein; who by innumerable experiments hath demonstrated an excess of kindness to us; who in all his dealings with us purely doth aim at our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness toward us; who never *doth afflict or grieve us*[z] more against our will, than against his own desire; never indeed but when goodness itself calleth for it, and even mercy doth urge thereto; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us: and doth not such a will deserve regard; may it not demand compliance from us? to neglect or infringe it, what is it? is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude?

So doth every relation of God recommend his will to us; and each of his attributes doth no less: for,

It is the will of him who is most holy, or whose will is essential rectitude: how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity?

It is the will of him who is perfectly just; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous will, and avenge the violation thereof: is it then advisable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation; or to run upon the edge of necessary severity?

It is the will of him who is infinitely wise; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best for us, what doth most befit our capacities and circumstances; what in the final result will conduce to our greatest advantage and comfort: shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain mind before the oracles of his wisdom? shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring will, follow the impulse of our giddy humour?

It is the will of him, who is immensely good and benign, whose will therefore can be no other than good-will to us; who can mean nothing thereby but to derive bounty and mercy on us: can we then fail of doing well, if we put ourselves entirely into his hands? are we not our own greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions?

It is, finally, the will of him who is uncontrollably powerful; whose will therefore must prevail one way or other; either with our will or against it; either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us: for, *My counsel* (saith he) *shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*[a] As to his dispensations, we may wail, we may bark at them; but we cannot alter or avoid them: sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the sun in his career, than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree: what he layeth on, no hand can remove; what he hath destined, no power can reverse: our anger therefore will be ineffectual, our impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt and augment our grief.

As to his commands, we may *lift up ourselves against them*,[b] we may fight stoutly, we may in a sort prove conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies whereof shall be erected in hell, and stand upon the ruins of our happiness; for, while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under incensed justice: if God cannot fairly procure his will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his will upon us in way of righteous vengeance; if we do not surrender our wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger: he must reign over us, if not as over loyal subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn rebels to our confusion; for this in that case will be our doom, and the last words God will deign to spend upon us, *Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.*[c]

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.[d] Amen.

[z] Lam. iii. 33.

[a] Isa. xlvi. 10. [b] Dan. v. 23.
[c] Luke xix. 27. [d] Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

SERMON XXXVII.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.—*I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.**

IN these words, by the example of an eminent saint, is recommended to us the practice of an excellent duty, or virtue; a practice in itself most worthy, very grateful to God, and immediately of great benefit to ourselves; being indeed necessary towards the comfortable enjoyment of our lives: it is contentedness, the virtue which, of all other, doth most render this world acceptable, and constituteth a kind of temporal heaven; which he that hath is thereby *ipso facto* in good measure happy, whatever other things he may seem to want;† which he that wanteth, doth, however otherwise he be furnished, become miserable, and carrieth a kind of hell within him: it cannot, therefore, but well deserve our best study about it, and care to get it; in imitation of St. Paul, who *had learned in whatever state he was, therein to be content.*

In discoursing upon which words, I shall consider two particulars: first, the virtue itself (contentedness in every state), the nature of which I shall endeavour to explain; then the way of attaining or producing it, implied by St. Paul in the words, *I have learned.*

I. For explication of the virtue: the word here expressing it is *αὐτάρκεια*, which signifieth self-sufficiency, or having enough of oneself;‡ the which is not to be understood absolutely, as if he took himself to be independent in nature, able to subsist of himself, not wanting any support or comfort without himself (for this is the property and privilege of the great *El-shaddai*, who alone subsisteth of himself, needing toward his being and felicity nothing without himself; this is repugnant to the nature of man, who is a creature essentially dependent for his being and subsistence, indigent of many things for his satisfaction and welfare), but relatively considering his present state, the circumstances wherein he was, and the capacities he had; which by God's disposal and providence were such, that he could not want more than he had in his possession or reach. He meant not to exclude God, and his providence; but rather supposed that as the ground and cause of his self-sufficiency; according as otherwhere he expresseth it: *Not as if we were sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God:*[a] nor did he intend to exclude the need of other creatures, otherwise than as considered without his possession, or beyond his power; but he meaneth only, that he did not desire or lack more than what God had supplied him with; had put into his hand, or had set within his reach; that his will did suit to his state, his desire did not exceed his power.

This is the meaning of the word which the apostle useth: but for the more full and clear understanding the virtue itself, we shall first consider the object about which it is conversant; then the several acts which it requireth, or wherein the exercise thereof consisteth—

1. The object of contentedness is the present state of things, whatever it be (whether prosperous or adverse, of eminency or meanness, of abundance or scantiness), wherein by divine Providence we are set: *τὰ ἐν οἷς ἐσμὲν, the things in which we are*; that is, our present condition, with all its circumstances: so it may be generally supposed, considering that it is ordinary, and almost natural for men (who have not learned as St. Paul had done, or are not instructed and exercised in the practice of this duty) to be dissatisfied and disquieted in every state; to be always in want of something; to find defects in every fortune; to fancy they may be in better case, and to desire it earnestly: if we estimate things wisely, rich men are more liable to discontent than poor men. It is observable, that prosperity is a peevish thing, and men of highest fortune are apt most easily to resent the smallest things: a little neglect, a slight word, an unpleasing look doth affect them more than reproaches, blows, wrongs, do those of a mean condition.

Prosperity is a nice and squeamish

* Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμὶ, αὐτάρκης εἶναι.

† Τὸ δ' αὔταρκες τίθεμεν, ὁ μονούμενον αἱρετὸν ποιεῖ τὸν βίον, καὶ μηδένὸς ἐνδεᾶ.—Arist. Eth. i. 7.

‡ Τὸ εὐδαιμονοῦν ἀπέχειν δεῖ πάντα ἃ θέλει, πεπληρωμένῳ εἶναι ἱκανέναι· οὐ δίψος δεῖ προσεῖναι, οὐδὲ λιμόν.—Arr. iii. 24.

[a] 2 Cor. iii. 5.

thing, and it is hard to find any thing able to please men of a full and prosperous state, which being uncapable of bettering in substantial things, they can hardly find matter of solid delight. Whereas a poor estate is easily comforted by the accession of many things which it wanteth; a good meal, a small gift, a little gain, or good success of his labour, doth greatly please a poor man, with a very solid pleasure: but a rich man hath nothing to please him, but a new toy, a puff of applause, success at a horse-race, at bowls, at hunting; in some petty sport and pastime, which can yield but a very thin and transitory satisfaction to any man not quite brutified and void of sense: whence contentedness hath place, and is needful in every condition, be it in appearance never so prosperous, so plentiful, so pleasant: *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.*[b]

The formal object thereof may indeed seem to be a condition distasteful to our sense, or cross to our fancy; an adverse or strait condition; a condition of poverty, of disgrace, of any great inconvenience or distress incident to us in this world; but since the most men are absolutely in such a condition, exposed to so many wants and troubles; since many more are needy comparatively, wanting the conveniences that others enjoy, and which themselves affect; since there are few, who in right estimation are not indigent and poor, that is, who do not desire and fancy themselves to want many things which they have not (for wealth consisteth not so much in the possession of goods, as in apprehension of freedom from want, and in satisfaction of desires), since care, trouble, disappointment, satiety, and discontent following them, do not only haunt cottages, and stick to the lowest sort of people, but do even frequent palaces, and pursue men of highest rank; therefore any state may be the object of contentedness; and the duty is of a very general concernment; princes themselves need to learn it; the lessons teaching it, and the arguments persuading it, may as well suit the rich and noble, as the poor and the peasant; so our apostle himself doth intimate in the words immediately following our text: *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need:* he had the art, not only to manage well both conditions, but to be satisfied in either.

But seeing real adversity, poverty, and disgrace, have naturally the strongest influence in disturbing and disordering our minds; that contentedness is plainly most needful in such cases, as the proper support, or medicine of our mind in them; that other states do need it only as they, by fancy or infirmity, do symbolize or conspire with these; therefore unto persons in these states we shall more explicitly apply our directions and persuasions, as to the proper and primary subjects of contentedness; the which by analogy, or parity of reason, may be extended to all others, who by imaginary wants and distresses do create displeasure to themselves. So much for the object, or the subject, of the virtue.

2. The acts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth (which are necessary ingredients or constant symptoms of it), belong either to the mind and understanding, or to the will and appetite, or to external demeanour and practice; being, 1. right opinions and judgments of mind; 2. fit dispositions and affections of heart; 3. outward good actions and behaviours, in regard to our condition and the events befalling us; the former being as the root and stock, the latter as the fruits and the flowers of the duty: unto which may be reduced the correspondent negations, or absence of bad judgments, affections, and deportments in respect to the same objects.

(1.) As to our opinions and judgments of things, contentedness requireth, that,

1. We should believe our condition, whatever it be, to be determined by God; and that all events befalling us do proceed from him; at least that he permitteth and ordereth them, according to his judgment and pleasure; *Ξὺν τῷ Θεῷ πᾶς καὶ γελᾷ κ'ῳδύρεται,*[d] all, as the prophet singeth, *both good and evil, proceedeth out of the mouth of the Most High;* that *affliction* (as Job said), *cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring*

[b] Job. xx. 22; Chrys. tom. vii. p. 68.

[c] Phil. iv. 12.

[d] Soph. Aj. Lor.

out of the ground;[e] as a thing arising spontaneously, or sowed by the hand of some creature; but rather descendeth from him, who saith, *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.*[f]

We are apt, when any thing falleth out unpleasant to us, to exclaim against fortune, and to accuse our stars; or to inveigh against the second causes which immediately offend us, ascribing all to their influence;* which proceeding doth argue in us a heathenish ignorance and infidelity, or at least much inconsiderateness, and impotency of mind; that our judgment is blinded and clouded, or perverted and seduced by ill passions; for that in truth there is not in the world any occurrence merely fortuitous or fatal (all being guided and wielded by the powerful hand of the all-wise and almighty God), there is no creature which in its agency doth not depend upon God, as the instrument of his will, or subordinate thereto; wherefore upon every event we should, raising our minds above all other causes, discern and acknowledge God's hand; as David did, when Shimei cursed him: *Let him* (said the good king) *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David;*[g] as Job did, when he was rifled of his goods: *The Lord,* (said he) *gave, and the Lord hath taken away;*[h] as our Saviour did, when, in regard to the sore hardships he was designed to undergo, he said, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink?*

2. Hence we should always judge every thing which happeneth to be throughly good and fit, worthy (all things considered) to be appointed, or permitted, by that Governor of things; not entertaining any harsh thoughts of God, as if he were not enough wise, just, or benign in ordering us to be afflicted or crossed; but taking all occurrences to be well consistent with all God's holy perfections and attributes.†

We are apt to conceit that the world is ill ordered, when we do not thrive and prosper therein; that every thing is irregular which squareth not to the models of our fancy; that things had gone much better if our designs had found success: but these are vain and perverse conceits; for that certainly is most good which seemeth good to God;* his will is a perfect standard of right and convenience, his eye never aimeth wrong, his hand never faileth to hit the mark of what is best: *All his paths are mercy and truth; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;*[i] so did king Hezekiah rightly judge, when, upon denunciation of a sad doom to his country and posterity, he replied to the prophet, *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken;*[k] so even the pagan sage discerned, when he thus rebuked a malecontent: *You slave, do you forsooth desire any thing, but what is best? and is not that only best, which seemeth best to God?*†

3. We should even be satisfied in our mind, that, according to God's purpose, all events do tend and conduce to our particular welfare; being not only good to us as members of the world, and in order to more general ends, but serving towards our private benefit and advantage. We may be ready perhaps to confess, that whatever happeneth may be indeed just and fit in some distant and occult respects; but hardly can we be induced to allow, that what we feel offensive to our sense and fancy is really good for us, or was meant for our benefit; we cannot easily discern any thing of love or favour in such matters: those sort of aphorisms, in holy scripture, *Happy is the man whom God correcteth; as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;*[l] sound strangely, and are huge paradoxes to us;

*Atque Deos, atque astra vocat crudelia mater.

† Παραχωρήσωμεν τοίνυν παρακάλῳ τῷ σοφῷ τοῦ παντὸς κυβερνήτῃ, καὶ στέρξωμεν τὰ οἰκονομούμενα, ὑποῖα ποτ' ἂν ᾖ κἂν θυμέρη, κἂν λυπηρὰ, &c.—Theod. Ep. 136.

* Placeat homini quicquid Deo placuit.—*Sen. Ep.* 75.

Στέργειν γὰρ χρὴ τὰ παρὰ τῆς ἀῤῥήτου σοφίας πρυτανευόμενα, καὶ ταῦτα πάντως νομίζειν συμφέροντα.—Theod. Ep. 15.

Οἶδε γὰρ ὡς σοφὸς τὸ συμφέρον, καὶ ὡς ἀγαθὸς τοῦτο ἡμῖν πραγματεύεται.—Id. Ep. 18.

† Ἀνδράποδον, ἄλλο γὰρ θέλεις, ἢ τὸ ἄμεινον; ἄλλο οὖν τι ἄμεινον, ἢ τὸ θεῷ δοκοῦν;—Arr. xi. 7.

[e] Lam. iii. 38; Amos iii. 6; 1 Kings xi. 15, 24.
[f] Isa. xlv. 7.
[g] 2 Sam. xvi. 10.
[h] Job i. 21.
[i] John xviii 11.
[k] 2 Kings xx. 19.
[l] Job v. 17; James i. 12; Rev. iii. 19; Prov. iii. 12.

such is our blindness of mind, and dullness of apprehension: but God knoweth with so exact a skilfulness to manage things, that every particular occurrence shall be advantageous to the person whom it toucheth; and accordingly to each one he dispenseth that which is most suitable to him; whence, as frequently it is necessary for our good that we should be crossed (for that indeed otherwise we should often much harm, sometimes we should quite undo ourselves), so it always, when God so ordereth it, is to be deemed most profitable and wholesome for us: we are therefore in reason obliged to take the saddest accidents and sharpest afflictions, coming upon us by Providence, to be no other than fatherly corrections, or frendly rebukes, designed to render us good and happy; as arguments therefore and instances of especial good-will towards us; conceiving under every dispensation, that we do, as it were, hear God speaking to us, as he did to those in the prophet: *I know the thoughts, that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*[m]

4. Hence we are to believe, that our present condition (whatever it be to the carnal or worldly sense) is in right judgment, all things considered, the best, most proper, most desirable for us; better then we, if it were at our discretion and choice, should put ourselves into: for that God (*the Saviour of all men*, who *desireth that no man should perish:* who *is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works;*[n] who exceedingly tendereth the welfare of his children and subjects) doth ever (here in this life, the time of merit and trial) with a most wise good-will design our best good; and by the most proper methods (such as do best suit our circumstances and capacities) doth aim to draw us into happiness; and accordingly doth assign a station for us most befitting in order to that great end: we therefore should think ourselves well placed, because we are where God doth set us; that we have enough, because we have what God alloteth us.

There are other more particular judgments, which contentedness involveth, or which are required toward it; such as these: that nothing originally is due to us, but all cometh purely from divine favour and bounty; that all adversities are justly and deservedly inflicted on us, as the due wages, or natural fruits of our sins; that our happiness dependeth not on any present enjoyments or possessions, but may well subsist without them; that a competency (or so much as sufficeth to maintain our life without intolerable pain) ought to satsfy our desires: but these and the like judgments will come opportunely to be considered as motives to the practice of the duty.

(2.) From such acts of our mind, or intellective part, concerning things incident to us, should proceed the following dispositions of will and affection:—

1. We should entertain all occurrences, how grievous soever to us, with entire submission, and resignation of our will to the will of God; wholly acquiescing in his good pleasure; saying in our hearts after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done;* with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* with David, *Behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him;* even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be;** with Epictetus, *I always chiefly will that which cometh to pass; for I account that better which God willeth, than what I will myself; I will adhere as a minister and follower to him, I pursue, I affect, I simply will with him:*†[o] looking upon them as sent from God, we should heartily bid them welcome, we should kindly embrace them, we should use them with all fair respect: ἀσπάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα (to hug, or kindly to *embrace things incident*), φιλεῖν, τὰ ἀπονεμόμενα, *to love things dispensed by Providence*[p]), are precepts, which even as dictated by natural reason, philosophers do much inculcate.

This excludeth all rebellious insurrection, and swellings of mind against providence, such as argue that we dislike God's

[m] Jer. xxix. 11.

[n] 1 Tim. ii. 4; Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 9; Psal. cxlv 9

* Εἰ ταῦτη θεοῖς φίλον, ταῦτη γενέσθω.

† Ἀεὶ μᾶλλον θέλω τὸ γινόμενον· κρεῖττον γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι, ὃ ὁ Θεὸς θέλει, ἢ ἐλῶ· προσκείσομαι διάκονος καὶ ἀκόλουθος ἐκείνῳ, συνορμῶ, ὁρέγομαι, ἁπλῶς συνθέλω.—Arr. iii. 7.

[o] Luke xxii. 42; 1 Sam. iii. 18; 2 Sam. xv. 26.

[p] M. Anton. 3, 4, 2, 17, 10, 11, 12, 1.

government; that, were we able, we should struggle with God's will; that we gladly would shake off his yoke; all such ill resentment and repining at our lot, which maketh God's hand grievous, and his yoke uneasy to us; such affections as the Wise Man toucheth, when he saith, *The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.*[q]

2. We should bear all things with steady calmness and composedness of mind, suppressing or quelling those tumults, those storms, those excesses of passion, which the sense of things disgustful is apt to excite; such as are immoderate grief, fierce anger, irksome despair, and the like. No adversity should so ruffle our minds, as to defeat or pervert the use of our reason, so as to hinder us from perceiving or performing what becometh us, so as to engage us into any irregular or unseemly behaviour.*

3. We should indeed bear the worst events with an *εὐθυμία*, that is, with a sweet and cheerful disposition of mind, so as not to be put out of humour; not to be dejected or quite discouraged by them,† not to fall into that *heaviness*, which, as the Wise Man saith, *maketh the heart of man to stoop;*[r] but rather finding delight and complacence in them, as considering whence they come, whither they aim and tend: such was the disposition and demeanour of the apostles and primitive good Christians in the midst of their most grievous adversities and sufferings;‡ *they rejoiced*, &c. they did *take joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, they did *account it all joy when they fell into divers tribulations:* they were, *ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, as grieved, but always rejoicing;*[s] their state was grievous, but their heart was constantly cheerful. Such a constant frame of mind we should maintain, so continually prepared we should be against all contingencies, that nothing should happen amiss to us, so as deeply to affect us, or to unsettle us in our humour; that every thing from God's hand should be acceptable; that no sadness may seize on us, at least that we do not indulge or cherish it; that in nowise we suffer any regret to quench that spiritual comfort and joy in God, which *becometh the upright*, as the Psalmist saith, and which we are so often enjoined perpetually to maintain, as in all cases, so particularly under afflictions and trials.[t] We cannot indeed hardly be content, if we are not cheerful; for it is hard to be altogether on the suffering and bearing hand, without any pleasure: the mind can hardly stand in a poise, so as neither to sorrow nor joy; we cannot digest adversity, if we do not relish it; we shall not submit to it as his will, if we do not take it for an argument of his love: *εὐδοκῶ, I* (saith St. Paul) *have a liking or pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.*[u]

4. We should with faith and hope rely and wait on God for the removal or easement of our afflictions; or, however, we should confide in him for grace, and strength to support them well: as our Saviour did, when he prayed, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup;* as they did in the prophet, who said, *In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited on thee;*[v] according to that rule in the Lamentations, *It is good that a man should both hope, and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord;*[w] and those precepts in the Psalms, *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*[x]

We should in any case be ready with the holy Psalmist thus to interrogate and sustain ourselves: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou so dis-*

* Let no man be moved by these afflictions; *μηδένα σαίνεσθαι* (i. e. *θορυβεῖσθαι*.—Chrys.)— 1 Thess. iii. 3.

† Ἡ *κατὰ κόσμον λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται*.—2 Cor. vii. 10.

‡ Εὐδοκῶ *ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις ὑπὲρ* Χριστοῦ.—2 Cor. xii. 10.

Εἰς *πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν, καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς*. —Col. i. 11.

[q] Prov. xix. 3.

[r] Prov. xii. 22.

[s] Acts v. 41; Heb. x. 34; James i. 2; 2 Cor. vi. 10.

[t] Psal. xxxiii. 1; xcvii. 12; Phil. iv. 4; iii. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Pet. iv. 13.

[u] 2 Cor. vii. 10.

[v] Luke xxii. 42; Isa. xxvi. 8; xxxiii. 2.

[w] Lam. iii. 26.

[x] Psal. xxxvii. 7; xxvii. 14; xl. 1; xxxiii. 20; lxii. 1; xxv. 3; lxix. 6; xvi. 8.

quieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance.[y]

Remembering and considering, that (as we are expressly taught in scripture, and as all our religion doth clearly suppose) *God knoweth to rescue the godly out of tribulation*[z] (he knoweth the proper season, when it is fit to do it;) that *he is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it;*[a] reflecting, I say, on these certain points of Christian truth, we should never *sorrow as those who are without hope;*[b] we should never despair of a good riddance from our adversity, when it shall be seasonable or beneficial for us; we should always be assured of a comfortable support under it, which is usually better than deliverance from it;[c] our minds should never sink into despondency or disconsolateness: that this is practicable in the worst case, we have conspicuous instances to assure us; it hath been the practice of most illustrious and excellent persons, particularly of the holy apostles; never was any condition, in outward respects and appearance, more forlorn and dismal than was theirs; yet it nowise bereaved them of hope or courage: *We* (they could say) *are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*[d]

5. We should indeed not so much as faint or languish in our minds upon any such occasion; no adversity should impair the forces of our reason or our spirit; should enervate our courage, or slacken our industry; should render us sick, or weak in heart; for, *If* (saith the Wise Man) *thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small* (it is the sign of an infirm mind), and, μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *not to falter* or decay, αὐ ἐκλύεσθαι, *not to be dissolved*, or disjointed, *in our souls* (as the body is in scorbutic distempers), are rules prescribed to us in such cases:[e] we do then indeed need a firm and robust constitution of soul,* we should then bear up most resolutely and stoutly: the encouragement of Moses to the people, entering upon battle, may well be accommodated to us, in regard to our conflict with adversities: *Let not your hearts faint, fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them.*[f]

6. We should not be weary of our condition, or have irksome longings for alteration; but, with a quiet indifferency and willingness of mind, lie under it during God's pleasure; according to the Wise Man's advice, *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction;*[g] and that of the apostle, enforced by our Lord's example, *Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*[h] We should not think God slow, or his time long and tedious, as if he were forgetful of us, or backward to succour us, as the Psalmist was inclined to do, when in the day of trouble he brake forth into these conceits and expressions: *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forbidden to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?*[i] Thus he in a sad mood was apt to think and speak; but, recollecting himself, he perceived it was his error, and confessed it was his fault thus to imagine, *I said, it was mine infirmity;* and it will be ours likewise, if we entertain such conceptions and resentments: we should with the same mind endure our present state, as we do pass through a hard winter, or a time of foul weather, taking it for seasonable and fit, because the wise Author of nature hath so appointed and ordered it.

7. We should by adverse accidents be rendered lowly in our own eyes, and sober in our conceits of ourselves; meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirit; sensible of our unworthiness and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury, and misery, of our actual offences and miscarriages; deeply

[y] Psal. xlii. 5.
[z] 2 Pet. ii. 3; 1 Pet. v. 7; Matt. vi. 25.
[a] 1 Cor. x. 13. [b] 1 Thess. iv. 13.
[c] Isa. xl. 31; Mic. vii. 7.
[d] 2 Cor. iv. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 11.
[e] Prov. xxiv. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 16; Rev. ii. 3; 2 Thess. iii. 13; Gal. vi. 9; Heb. xii. 3.

* ——nunc animis opus est, nunc pectore firmo.

[f] Deut. xx. 3. [g] Prov. iii. 11.
[h] Heb. xii. 3. [i] Psal. lxxvii. 7, 10.

affected in regard to the awful majesty and power, to the perfect holiness and strict justice of God; they should quell our haughty stomach, they should supple our stiff wilfulness, they should soften our hard hearts, they should mitigate our peevish humours: to effect these things, is usually the design of such accidents, and it is ever the best fruit of them: this is that which St. Peter adviseth to, when he saith, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;*[j] which God approveth, and encourageth with a gracious promise, when he saith, *To this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word:*[k] this disposition is an inseparable adherent to contentedness; he that hath not his spirit thus broken, or mollified, will hardly be content in any state; he that is haughty in conceit, and sturdy in humour, will every where find that which will cross and disturb him.

8. It is required that we should, notwithstanding any meanness, any hardness of our condition, be meekly and kindly affected toward others, being satisfied and pleased with their most prosperous state.* We should not be angry with the world, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; we should not be sullen or peevish toward any man, because his fortune is better than ours; we should not repine or grudge at the good success of any of our brethren, because we want the like ourselves; *we should rather rejoice with those that rejoice;*[l] innocently filching some pleasure from them, or borrowing some satisfaction from their enjoyments. It is *human* thus to do, because of the natural cognation and friendship of men; it is more especially *Christian*, because of our spiritual consanguinity; by virtue whereof we are so knit together, and made *members each to other*, that, *if* (as St. Paul telleth us) *one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honoured, all the members should rejoice with it:*[m] we can hardly be content without thus appropriating the goods, and sharing in the delights of others; he can never be content, who looketh *with an evil eye* upon other men's prosperity; he cannot do well himself, who loveth not to see his neighbour do well; numberless occasions will happen to discompose and vex him.

Adversity impatiently borne is apt to sour our spirits, and render us froward toward men; especially when it proceedeth from the unkindness, ingratitude, or treachery of friends, or of persons obliged to us for our good-will, or for benefits done to them: but nothing should render us unkindly disposed toward the world, nothing should extinguish charity in us toward any man; so plain reason teacheth us, so great examples enforce: Moses did not lose his affection towards his countrymen, because he was by one of them threatened away into banishment and vagrancy; the apostles became not disaffected to the world, because it misused and persecuted them; our Lord did continue most earnestly to desire, and laboriously to endeavour the good of those who most despitefully used him: like theirs, in all cases, should our disposition be; we should ever observe the Psalmist's advice, *Cease from anger, forsake wrath, fret not thyself in anywise to do evil.*[n]

9. Again: Contentedness doth imply a freedom from all solicitude and anxiety of mind, in reference to provision for our needs, and conveniences of life; according to those rules and precepts of *casting our burden and care upon the Lord*, of *being careful for nothing, but commending our affairs to God's ordering;*[o] according to that most comfortable precept of our Lord, *Take no care, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, How shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye want all these things.*[p] If we do not thus, it is hardly possible that we should be content; if we do not depend upon Providence, we cannot escape being often distracted with care, and perplexed with fear; we cannot cheerfully hope for any

* Ita plerumque contingit, ut dum aliquos fratres nostros in quantulacunque requie constitutos in mediis nostris anxietatibus cogitamus, non parva ex parte recreemur, tanquam et nos ideo ipsi quietius, tranquilliusque vivamus.—*Aug. Ep.* 144.

[j] 1 Pet. v. 6. [k] Isa. lxvi. 2.
[l] Rom. xii. 15.
[m] Rom. xii. 15; 1 Cor. xii. 26.
[n] Psal. xxxvii. 8.
[o] 1 Pet. v. 7; Psal. xxxvii. 5; lv. 23; Phil. iv. 6.
[p] Matt. vi. 31.

thing we need, nor be quietly secure of any thing we possess.

10. It requireth also that we should curb our desires, and confine them in the narrowest bounds we can; so as not to affect more in quantity, or better in quality than our nature and state do require:* if we must have superfluities, if we can only relish dainties, we shall never be pleased; for as nature hath limits, and is content with little; as there is no state in this world, the exigences whereof may not be answered with a competence; so curiosity is an infinite and insatiable thing: *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich;*[a] that is, he which is curious and nice in his desires will never have enough:† the rule which, according to St. Paul, should regulate our desires, is this: *Having food and raiment, let us with them be satisfied:*[r] if this will satisfy us, we may easily obtain satisfaction:‡ a moderate industry, with God's blessing, will procure so much; God hath promised to bestow it; if this will not suffice, there is no sure way of getting or keeping more: as God is nowise obliged to provide us superfluities, or concerned to relieve our extravagant longings; so we may fear that Providence will be ready to cross us in our cares and endeavours tending to those purposes; so that we shall be disappointed in the procurement, or disturbed in the fruition of such needless things. However, he that is most scant in his desires, is likely to be most content in his mind: *He* (as Socrates said) *is nearest the gods* (who need nothing) *that needeth fewest things.*§

In fine, contentedness doth import, that, whatever our condition is, our minds and affections should be modelled and squared just according to it; so that our inclinations be compliant, our desires be congruous thereto; so that easily we can comport with the inconveniences, can relish the comforts, can improve the advantages sticking thereto; otherwise, like an ill-made garment, it will sit unhandsome upon us, and be troublesome to us. It is not usually our condition itself, but the unsuitableness thereof to our disposition and desires (which soureth all its sweets, and rendereth its advantages fruitless), that createth discontent; for, although it be very mean, others bear the same cheerfully; many would be glad thereof: if therefore we will be content, we must bend our inclinations, and adapt our desires to a correspondence with our state.

If we are rich, we should get a large and bountiful heart, otherwise our wealth will hang loose about us; the care and trouble in keeping it, the suspicion and fear of losing it, the desire of amplifying it, the unwillingness to spend or use it, will bereave us of all true satisfaction therein, and render it no less unsavoury to us, than unprofitable to others.

If we are poor, we should have a frugal, provident, industrious mind, sparing in desires, free from curiosity, willing to take pains, able to digest hardships; otherwise the straitness of our condition will pinch and gall us.

Are we high in dignity or reputation? we then need a mind well ballasted with sober thoughts, otherwise the wind of vanity will drive us into absurd behaviours, thence will dash us upon disappointments, and consequently will plunge us into vexation and discontent.

Are we mean and low? we need a meek and lowly, a calm and steady spirit; not affecting little respects, or resenting the want of them; apt to pass over or to bear quietly petty affronts and neglects; not apt to be moved by words signifying contempt or disdain; else (being fretted with such things, which in this ill-natured and hard-hearted world we may be sure often to meet with) we shall be uneasy in our minds, and impatiently wish a change of our state.

These, and the like dispositions and affections of soul, this duty containeth or requireth: from hence should arise a correspondent external demeanour, and such actions as these which follow:—

1. We should restrain our tongues from all unseemly and unsavoury expressions, implying dissatisfaction in God's proceed-

* Ἥδιστα πολυτελείας ἀπολαύουσιν οἱ ἥκιστα ταύτης δεόμενοι.—Epic. ad Menœc.

Ventre nihil novi frugalius.—*Juv. Sat.* v. 6.

† Αἱ κατὰ φύσιν ὀρέξεις ἀπαρκείᾳ περιορίζεται.—Cl. Alex. Paed. ii.

‡ Si ad naturam vives nunquam eris pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam dives.—*Epic. Ser. Ep.* 16.

§ Ὁ ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος, ἐγγύτατα θεῶν.—Socr. in Xenoph. Apomn. iii.

[a] Prov. xxii. 17. [r] 1 Tim. vi. 8.

ings, or displeasure at his providence; arguing desperation or distrust in God; such as were those of the discontented and impatient Israelites: *They* (saith the Psalmist) *spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?*[s] Such as they used, of whom the prophet saith, *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King and their God;*[t] as those in the Apocalypse, who, being afflicted with deserved judgments, *did blaspheme the name of God, which had power over those plagues—blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores.*[u] Into such profane enormities of language is discontent apt to break forth, questioning the power of God, or his willingness to succour us; venting wrath and displeasure toward him; charging him foolishly with injustice, or with unkindness, or with negligence, or with impotency; the abstaining from which behaviour, under the sense of his bitter calamities, is a great commendation of Job: *In all this* (it is said) *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly.**

2. We should indeed forbear any the least compliant or murmuring, in regard to the dispensations of Providence; or upon dissatisfaction in the state allotted us: St. Jude saith, that God in the last day *will come, to execute judgment, and to convince men of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him: these* (subjoineth he) *are* γογγυσταὶ μεμψίμοιροι, *murmurers, that complain of their lot;*[v] which signifieth the heinousness and extreme dangerousness of this practice, *Wherefore doth the living man complain?*[w] is the prophet's question, implying it to be an unreasonable and blameable practice. Wherefore the advice of David is good; to suppress all complaint, to be still and silent in such cases: *Be still* (saith he) *and know that I am God;* and, *Be silent to the Lord;*[x] the which precepts his practice may seem well to interpret and back: *I was* (saith he) *dumb; I opened not my mouth, because it was thy doing:*[y]* and accordingly Job, *Behold* (said he, after having considered all the reasons he could imagine of God's proceedings), *I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*[z] And thus our Saviour, when *he was oppressed and afflicted, opened not his mouth.*[a]

3. Yea, it is our duty, in these cases, to spend our breath in declaring our satisfaction in God's dealing with us;† acknowledging his wisdom, justice, and goodness therein; blessing and praising him for all that hath befallen us; each of us confessing after David, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;*[b] imitating Job, who, upon the loss of all his goods, did say no more than this; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*[c]

4. We should abstain from all irregular, unlawful, and unworthy courses toward the removal or remedy of our needs or crosses, choosing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relax ourselves; rather bearing patiently than violently, like those in the phrophet, *breaking our yoke and bursting our bands. Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.*[d] We should rather continue poor, than by cozenage or rapine endeavour to raise our fortune; we should rather lie under disgrace and contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances strive to acquire the respect and favor of men; we should rather willingly rest in the lowest condition, than do as those who, by disturbing the world, by fomenting disorders and factions, by supplanting their neighbour's welfare, by venting slanders and detractions, do labour to amplify their estate: we should rather endure any inconvenience or

* Job i. 22,—Οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἀφροσύνην τῷ Θεῷ. Ἀλλ' ἔχει σιγῆ μῦθον, ἐπίτρεψον δὲ θεοῖσι.—Hom. Od. Γ.

† Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν. Οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι τοῦτο ἐπιλέγων ἀεὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι μοι τοῖς συμβαίνουσι.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. 11.

* ——————————σιωπῇ
Πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλὰ βίας ὑποδέγμενος ἀνδρῶν.—Od. E.

[s] Psal. lxxviii. 19; Num. xxi. 5.
[t] Isa. viii. 21.
[u] Rev. xvi 9, 11, 21.
[v] Jude 15, 16.
[w] Lam. iii 39.
[x] Psal. xlvi. 10; iv. 4; xxxvii. 7.
[y] Psal. xxxix. 9.
[z] Job xl. 4.
[a] Isa. liii. 7.
[b] Psal. cxix. 75.
[c] Job i. 21.
[d] Jer. v. 5.; Job. xxxvi. 21.

distress, than have recourse to ways of evading them disallowed by God, doing as the Jews did, who in their straits, against the declared pleasure of God, *set their faces toward Egypt, strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, trusted in the staff of that broken reed.*[e] In neglect or diffidence toward God, to embrace such aids is, as God in the prophet declareth, a very blameable and mischievous folly: *Ephraim* (saith he) *is like a silly dove without a heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria—Woe unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them because they have transgressed against me.*[f] We may consider how St. Paul reproveth the Corinthians for seeking a redress of wrongs, scandalous and dishonourable to the church: *Now, therefore, it is utterly a fault among you, that ye go to law one with another; Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*[g] Even to right ourselves in a way whereby any dishonour may come to God, or damage to his church is not to be approved; and better it is, in the apostle's judgment, to bear any injury or damage ourselves: *Better it is*, saith St. Peter, *if the will of God be so, that we suffer for well doing, than to do ill.* And, *Let them who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator*,[h] is another wholesome advice of that great apostle.

5. We should, notwithstanding any adversity, proceed in our affairs (such as God requireth, or reason putteth us upon) with alacrity, courage, and industry; performing, however, so far as our circumstances do permit, what is good and fit for us; no disappointment or cross, no straits or grievances of condition, should render us listless or lazy, but rather it should quicken and inflame our activity; this being a good way to divert us from the sense of our misfortunes, and to comfort us under their pressure; as also the readiest way to remove or to abate them, τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέσθαι, *to order the present well*, whatever it be;* to make the best of a bad matter, to march forward whither reason calls, how difficultly soever, or slowly it may be, in a rough or dirty way; not to yield to difficulties, but resolutely to encounter them, to struggle lustily with them, to endeavour with all our might to surmount them;* are acts worthy of manly reason and courage: to direct ill accidents to good ends, and improve them to honest uses, is the work of a noble virtue. If a bad game be dealt us, we should not presently throw up, but play it out as well we can; so perhaps we may save somewhat, we shall at least be busy till a better come. *Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good*,[i] is the Psalmist's advice in such a case; and it is a practice necessary to the procuring and maintaining content; if we be not otherwise well employed, we shall be apt, in our thoughts, to melancholize, and dote upon our mischances; the sense of them will fasten upon our spirits, and gnaw our hearts.

6. We should behave ourselves fairly and kindly toward the instruments and abettors of our adversity; toward those who brought us into it, and those who detain us under it, by keeping off relief, and those who forbear to afford the succour we might expect; forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge or enmity toward them; but rather, even upon that score, bearing good-will, and expressing kindness toward them; not only as to our brethren, whom, according to the general law of charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, and the instruments of his pleasure toward us; considering, that by maligning or molesting them, we do express ill resentments of God's dealing with us, and, in effect, through their sides, do wound his providence: thus did the good king behave himself toward Shimei, when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by him; not suffering (upon this account, because he was God's instrument of afflicting himself) that any harm should be done unto him: thus the holy apostles, *being reviled, did bless; being defamed, did entreat:* thus our Lord demeaned

[k] Κεφάντιον τὸ παρὸν σὺν εὐλογιστίᾳ.—Ant. iv. 26; vi. 2.

Τὸ παρὸν ἀπευθύνειν πρὸς ὁσιότητα καὶ δικαιοσύνην.—Id. xii. 1.

[e] Jer. xlii. 15; ii. 18, 13; Isa. xxx. 2; xxxvi. 6; xxxi 1; Ezek. xvii. 15.

[f] Hos. vii. 11, 13.

[g] 1 Cor. vi. 7.

[h] 1 Pet. iii. 17; iv. 19.

* Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.

[i] Psal. xxxvii 3.

himself toward his spiteful adversaries; who, *when he was reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but committed it to him that judgeth righteously.*[j] In all these cases we should at least observe the rules and advices of the Wise Man: *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me, I will render to the man according to his work; say thou not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.*[k]

Discontent usually consisteth not so much in displeasure for the things we suffer, as at the persons who bring them on us, or who do not help to rid us from them; it is their presumed injury or discourtesy which we do fret at: such passions, therefore, toward men, being discarded, our evils presently will become supportable, and content easily will ensue. As men in any sickness or pain, if their friends are about them, affording comfort or asistance, do not seem to feel any thing, and forbear complaining; so, if the world about us doth please us, if we bear no disaffection or grudge toward any person in view, our adversity will appear less grievous; it will indeed commonly be scarce sensible to us.

In these and such like acts the duty and virtue of contentedness doth especially reside; or it is employed and exercised by them: and so much may suffice for the explication of its nature. I come now to consider the way of attaining it, intimated by St. Paul here, when he saith, *I have learned.*

SERMON XXXVIII.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.—*I have learned*, &c.

THESE words signify how contentedness may be attained, or how it is produced: it is not an endowment innate to us; it doth not arrive by chance into us; it is not to be purchased by any price; it springeth not up of itself, nor ariseth from the quality of any state; but it is a product of discipline; *I have learned.*

It is a question debated in Plato, *εἰ διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετη, whether virtue be to be learned;* St. Paul plainly resolveth it in this case by his own experience and testimony. What Seneca saith in general of virtue (*Nature giveth not virtue; it is an art to become good**) is most true of this virtue; it is an art, with which we are not born, no more than with any other art or science; the which, as other arts, cannot be acquired without studious application of mind, and industrious exercise: no art indeed requireth more hard study and pain toward the acquiry of it, there being so many difficulties, so many obstacles in the way thereto: we have no great capacity, no towardly disposition to learn it; we must, in doing it, deny our carnal sense, we must settle our wild fancy, and suppress fond conceits; we must bend our stiff and stubborn inclinations; we must repress and restrain wanton desires; we must allay and still tumultuous passions; we must cross our humour and curb our temper: which to do is a hard chapter to learn; much consideration, much practice, much contention and diligence, are required thereto.

Hence it is an art which we may observe few do much study; and of the students therein, few are great proficients; so that, *Qui fit, Mecænas?* Horace's question, *How comes it to pass, that nobody liveth content with the lot assigned by God?* wanted not sufficient ground.

However, it is not, like the quadrature of the circle, or the philosopher's stone, an art impossible to be learned, and which will baffle all study: there are examples, which show it to be obtainable; there are rules and precepts, by observing which we may arrive to it.

And it is certainly a most excellent piece of learning; most deserving our earnest study: no other science will yield so great satisfaction, or good use; all other sciences, in comparison thereto, are dry and fruitless curiosities; for were we masters of all other knowledge, yet wanted the skill of being content, we should not be wise or happy; happiness and discontent are *ἀσύστατα* (things incompatible.)

[j] 2 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Cor. i. 12, 13; 1 Pet. ii. 23; iii. 9.

[k] Prov. xxiv. 29; xx. 22.

* Non dat natura virtutem, ars est bonum fieri.—*Sen. Ep.* 89.

Virtus estiamsi quosdam impetus ex natura sumit, tamen perficienda doctrina est.—*Quintil.* xii. 2.

But how then may this skill be learned? I answer, chiefly (divine grace concurring) by these three ways: 1. By understanding the rules and precepts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth. 2. By diligent exercise, or application of those rules to practice; whereby the habit will be produced. 3. By seriously considering, and impressing upon our minds those rational inducements (suggested by the nature and reason of things) which are apt to persuade the practice thereof. The *first* way I have already endeavoured to declare; the *second* wholly dependeth upon the will and endeavour of the learner; the *third* I shall now insist upon, propounding some rational considerations, apt, by God's help, to persuade contentedness, and serving to cure the malady of discontent. They may be drawn from several heads: from God, from ourselves, from our particular condition or state; from the world, or general state of men here; from the particular state of other men in comparison to ours; from the nature and consequences of the duty itself; every thing about us, well examined and pondered, will minister somewhat inducing and assisting thereto.

I. In regard to God we may consider, that equity doth exact, and gratitude requireth, and all reason dictateth, that we should be content;[a] or that, in being discontented, we behave ourselves very unbecomingly and unworthily; are very unjust, very ingrateful, and very foolish toward him.

1. Equity doth exact this duty of us, and in performing it we act justly toward God, both admitting his due right, and acknowledging his good exercise thereof; that saying in the gospel, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*[b] is a most evident maxim of equity: it is, therefore, the natural right and prerogative of God, as the Creator and Preserver, and consequently the absolute Lord, Owner, and Governor of all things, to assign his station, and allot his portion to every person, as he judgeth good and convenient; it is most just that inviolably he should enjoy this right: he being also infinitely wise and good, it is likewise most just to acknowledge that he doth perfectly well manage this right. Now, by contentful submission to God's disposal of things, we do worthily express our due regard to both these, avowing his right, and approving his exercise thereof; but by discontent and regret at what happeneth, we do in effect injure God in both those respects, disavowing his right, and impeaching his management. We do thereby so renounce his right, as (so far as conceit and wish do reach) to invade it, and usurp it to ourselves; signifying, that in our opinion things ought not to be ordered according to his judgment and pleasure, but after our fancy and humour; we claim to ourselves the privilege of controlling his estate, and dispensing his goods, so as to be our own carvers, and to assume to ourselves so much as we think good; we imply, that, if we were able, we would extort the power out of his hands, and manage it ourselves, modelling the world according to our conceits and desires.

We do also (since we cannot but perceive the other attempt of dispossessing God to be frivolous and fruitless) in effect charge God with misdemeanour, with iniquity or infirmity in his distribution and disposal of things;* intimating, that in our opinion he doth not order them so justly or so wisely as might be (not so well as we in our wisdom and justice should order them;) for did we conceive them managed for the best, we could not but judge it most unreasonable to be aggrieved, or to complain; so heinously insolent and unjust are we in being discontent. In earnest, which is most equal, that God should have his will, or we? For shame we shall say, God: why then do we not contentedly let him have it?

It is indeed, if we consider it, the highest piece of injustice that we can be guilty of, exceeding that which we commit in any other sort of disobedience. For as in any state, seditious mutinying is the greatest crime, as most directly violating the majesty, and subverting the authority of the prince; so in the world, none may be supposed more to offend and wrong its sovereign Governor, than such malecontents, who dislike and blame his proceedings: even a heathen could teach

[a] 1 Sam. iii. 18. [b] Matt. xx. 15.

* Multos inveni æquos adversus homines, adversus Deos neminem.—*Sen. Ep.* 93.

us, that it is our duty to *subject our mind to him that administereth all things, as good citizens to the law of the commonwealth ;** if we do not, we are rebellious and seditious, which is the highest pitch of injustice toward our most gracious Sovereign.

Again, there can be no greater injury or affront offered to God, than to *give him the lie*,[c] by questioning his veracity or fidelity. This discontent plainly doth involve: for God hath expressly declared himself ready upon all occasions to do us good; he hath promised to *care for us*, and *never to forsake us*,[d] or leave us destitute; which word of his, if we did not distrust, and take him to be unfaithful, we could not be discontent: as no man is displeased with his condition, or suspicious of want, who knoweth that he hath abundant supply of all he can need in a sure place; that he hath a person most able, most willing, most faithful, engaged to succour him: so, did we believe God to be true, who hath promised to help us, we could not be discontented for fear of any want.

We must at least, in so doing, suspect God to be deficient in goodness toward us, or unwilling to help us; or we must apprehend him impotent, and unable to perform what he would, and what he hath promised for us (like those infidels, who said, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?*[e]) which conceits of God are also very unworthy, and injurious to him.

2. Gratitude requireth of us this duty: for we having no right or title to anything; all that we have coming from God's pure bounty; he having upon us all (whatever our condition comparatively is, or may seem to us) freely conferred many great benefits, common to all men among us (our being, life, reason, capacity of eternal happiness, manifold spiritual blessings, incomparably precious and excellent), we in all reason should be thankful for these, without craving more, or complaining for the want of other things.* Whereas also all events, how cross soever to our sensual conceits or appetites, are by God designed and dispensed for our good, gratitude requireth that we should thank God for them, and not murmur against them.

Surely if, instead of rendering God thanks for all the excellent gifts which he most liberally (without any previous obligation to us, or desert of ours) hath bestowed on us, and continueth to bestow, we fret, and quarrel, that he doth not in smaller matters seem to cocker us, we are extremely ingrateful and disingenuous toward him. If any great person here should freely bestow on us gifts of huge value (high preferment or much wealth), but with good reason, as we might presume, should withhold from us some trifle, that we fancy or dote on, should we not be very unworthy, if we should take it ill and be angry with him for that cause? The case is plainly the same: God hath in the frankest manner bestowed on us innumerable and inestimable goods, in comparison whereto any comfort or convenience of our state here is very trivial and despicable: are we not, therefore, very ingrateful, if we heinously resent the want of any such things? if, upon any such account, we disgust his providence? Do we not deal, beyond all expression, unworthily with God, in so much undervaluing the goods which he hath given us, or doth offer us, and hath put in our reach? He hath made us capable of the greatest goods imaginable, and faithfully upon easy terms proffereth them to us; he even tendereth himself (himself, the immense and all-comprehending good, the fountain of all joy and bliss) to be fully enjoyed by us: his wisdom he offereth, to instruct and guide us; his power, to protect and guard us; his fulness, to supply us; his goodness, to comfort us: he offereth his love and favour to us, in having which we virtually and in effect have all things; becoming thereby, in the highest degree, rich and honourable and happy: and is it not then outrageous unworthiness to prize any other thing (any petty accommodation of this transitory life, any piti-

* Τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην, ὑποτάσσειν τῷ διοικοῦντι τὰ ὅλα, καθάπερ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ πολῖται τῷ νόμῳ τῆς πόλεως. —Arr. i. 12.

[c] 1 John v. 10.

[d] Matt. vi. 25, 36; Heb. xiii. 5.

[e] Psal. lxxviii. 19.

* Iniquus est qui muneris sui arbitrium danti non relinquit, avidus qui non lucri loco habet quod accepit, sed damni quod reddidit, &c.—*Sen. ad Polyb.* 29.

ful toy here) so much, as to be displeased for the want thereof; as if all this were not enough to satisfy our needs, or satiate our desires; as if, notwithstanding all these immense effusions (yea, as it were profusions) of bounty upon us, we could be indigent or unhappy? *Shall we* (to use that holy and most ingenuous consideration of Job) *receive so much good from the bountiful hand of God, and shall we not contentedly receive or bear so small evils from him?*[f] Evils, indeed in name and to gross sense, but not so in reality, not so in effect, at least not so in God's design;* but rather things very convenient and profitable for us; which is another aggravation of our ingratitude; for

Are we not also very ingrateful in misapprehending and disliking that, which God doeth out of very gracious intentions toward us; in loathing his fatherly and friendly dispensations; the fatherly chastisements and friendly disciplines which he unwillingly is forced (is, I say, forced by his own great love, and by our pressing needs) to inflict or impose upon us?† Surely our ill opinion of, or *despising*,[g] as the Wise Man calleth it, these unpleasant blessings, is no small fault; neither will our not discerning (out of affected dulness and stupid pravity not discerning) the wisdom of God's methods, and the wholesomeness of the means he useth to better us, excuse us from foul ingratitude.

3. Again, upon many accounts, reason further dictateth in respect to God, that we should be content: because it is most reasonable to acquiesce in God's choice of our state, he being infinitely more wise than we, and infinitely better understanding what is good for us than we can do; because he is well affected to us, and more truly loveth us than we do ourselves;‡ because he hath a just right, and irresistible power to dispose of us, the which (whatever we can do, however we resent it) he will effectually make use of; whence it is extremely foolish to be discontent: foolish it is to be dissatisfied with the results of his wisdom, adhering to our vain apprehensions; foolish to distrust his goodness in compliance with our fond self-love; foolish to contest his unquestionable right and uncontrollable power, having nothing but mere impotency to oppose against them; no less than downright madness it is to fret and fume at that which we can nowise help, to bark at that which lodgeth in heaven so far high above us, to solicit deaf necessity with our ineffectual wailings;* for if we think that our displeasure will affect God, that our complaints will incline him to alter our condition or comply with our wishes, we do conceit vainly, and without any ground: sooner may we, by our imagination, stop the tides of the sea, or turn the streams of rivers backward; sooner, by our cries, may we stay the sun, and change all the courses of the stars, than by our passionate resentments or moanful clamours we can check the current of affairs, or alter that state of things which is by God's high decree established:† discontented behaviour will rather fasten our condition, or remove it into a worse place; as it highly doth offend God, and increaseth our guilt, so it moveth God to continue, and to augment our evils. Thus lifting up our eyes to heaven, and considering the reference our disposition and demeanour hath to God, will induce us to bear our case contentedly.

II. Again, reflecting upon ourselves, we may observe much reason to be content with our state: in whatever capacity we look upon ourselves, it in reason becometh us, we in duty are obliged to be so.[h]

As men and creatures, we naturally are indigent and impotent; we have no just claim to any thing, nor any possession maintainable by our power; all that we have, or can have, cometh from most pure courtesy and bounty; wherefore, how little soever is allowed us, we have no wrong done us, nor can we justly

* Εὐχαριστῶ σοι πάτερ, ὦ ποιητὰ τῶν σῶν ἀνθρώπων—ὅτι ἀκοντας ἡμᾶς εὖ ποιεῖς, &c. said Philigrius in a grievous disease.—*Naz. Ep.* 66.

† Ἐπειδὴν τὸ μὴ πάσχειν οὐκ ἔχω, τοῦτό γε τῷ πάσχειν παρακερδαίνω, τὸ φέρειν, καὶ τὸ εὐχαριστεῖν. —Naz. de Se. Ep. 63.

‡ Εὔχετο πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἁπλῶς τἀγαθὰ διδόναι, ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς κάλλιστα εἰδότας ὁποῖα ἀγαθά ἐστι.— Xenoph. de Socr.—Charior est illis homo quam sibi.

[f] Job ii. 10. [g] Prov. iii. 11.

* Ἐάν τε κλαίῃς, ἄν τε μὴ, πορεύεται.—Philem.

† Οὐ γὰρ τις πρήξις πέλεται κρυεροῖο γόοιο. Π. Ω. Σὺ δ' εἶκ' ἀνάγκῃ, καὶ θεοῖσι μὴ μάχου.—Eurip.

[h] Lam. iii. 39.

complain thereat: such beggars as we are must not pretend to be choosers; if any thing be given us, we may be glad, we should be thankful. It is for those who have a right and a power to maintain it, to resent and expostulate if their due be withheld: but for us, that never had any thing which we could call our own; that have no power to get or keep any thing; for us, that came into the world naked and defenceless, that live here in continual, absolute, and arbitrary dependence for all our livelihood and subsistence; to contest with him that maintaineth us, or to complain of his dealing, is ridiculously absurd and vain.

Upon a moral account we have less reason to challenge aught, or to complain of any thing; for we deserve nothing but evil: if we rightly esteem and value ourselves, any thing will seem good enough for us, any condition will appear better than we deserve: duly examining the imperfections and infirmities of our nature, the disorder and depravedness of our hearts, the demeanours and enormities of our lives, we cannot but apprehend that we are even unworthy of the *crumbs which fall from our Master's table*;[i] we cannot but acknowledge with the good patriarch, that we *are less than the least of God's mercies*.[j] Considering our natural unworthiness, we shall see that we deserve not so much as those common benefits which all men enjoy, and without which we cannot subsist; so that, in regard to them, we shall be ready to acknowledge with the Psalmist, *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him; or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!*[k] Trying our hearts, and examining our ways, we shall soon discover it to be abundant mercy, that we are not utterly deprived of all good things, stript of all comforts, yea, dispossessed of our very being and life itself; that we are obliged to acknowledge, with those in the Lamentations, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not*.[l] Were we far better than we are, yet it would not become us to contest with him, to whose disposal and judgment we are subject; as Job teacheth us: *Behold* (saith he) *God taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? If he will not withdraw his anger, the proud* helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him? Whom, though I were righteous, I would not answer, but, I would make supplication to my Judge*:[m] but for us, men so unrighteous and guilty, to debate with, to question the proceedings of our Judge, it is much more unseemly.

Nothing can be more absurd, than for men so deeply indebted, than for sinners so very obnoxious to wrath, to be aggrieved in any state: shall we, who are conscious to ourselves of so many great sins against our God; who by wilful transgressions, or slothful neglects have so much affronted and offended him; who have so little requited his love, and so much abused his patience; who have borne so little fruit, and rendered him so little service; shall we be angry that our humour is not pleased in all things? shall we affect to swim in plenty, to wallow in pleasure, to bask ourselves in ease; to be fed with dainties, to be gaily clothed, to flourish in a brave and splendid condition, to be worshipped and honoured; who deserve not the meanest competence or lowest respect; to whom it is a great favour that we are permitted to subsist; whom strict justice would often have cast into utter misery and disconsolateness? It is not surely for such persons to be dissatisfied with any thing in this world, but to bless God's exceeding mercy that they abide there on this side of the bottomless pit: it is their part, with most submissive patience, to bear whatever is inflicted on them, humbly saying with him in the prophet, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him*.[n] Seeing, whatever our crosses or sufferings be, we cannot but confess to God, with those in Ezra, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve*;[o] being gainers upon the matter, having so much of our debt remitted in effect; being, in comparison to what was due to us, very tolerably, yea very favourably dealt

[i] Matt. xv. 17. [j] Gen. xxxii. 10.
[k] Psal. cxliv. 3; Job. vii. 27.
[l] Lam. iii. 22.

* Κήτη.
[m] Job ix. 12, &c. (ix. 32.)
[n] Mic. vii. 9. [o] Ezra ix. 13.

with, why should we be dissatisfied? If in such cases men should deal so favourably with us, we should be much pleased, and ready to thank them; why then should we take it ill of God, when he, even in his hardest proceedings against us, expresseth so much indulgence and mercy?

If we must be displeased, and lust to complain, we have reason much rather to accuse ourselves, than to exclaim at Providence; to bewail our sins, than to deplore our fortune: for our evils are not indeed so much the voluntary works of God, who *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men*,[p] as the natural products of our sins, which we do wilfully commit:* it is, as the prophet speaketh, *our sins* that *withhold good things from us*,[q] and bring evil things upon us: *fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.*[r] We make adversity necessary, or expedient for us, then we cry out upon it: we labour in planting, but cannot brook *the fruit of our doings;* we, like prodigals, fling away our estate in wanton profusions, then complain of want;[s] we affect and choose the causes, but loathe and cannot abide the certain consequences; so fond in our conceits, so perverse are we in our affections: *Wherefore doth the living man complain for the punishment of his sins?*[t] so well might the prophet demand and expostulate.

We may further, looking on ourselves, consider ourselves as servants to God, or rather as slaves, absolutely subject to his disposal; and shall any servant, shall a mere slave, presume to choose his place, or determine his rank in the family? shall he appoint to himself what office he will discharge, what garb he shall go in, what diet he must have; what he will do, and how he shall be accommodated? Is it not fit that all these things should be left to our Master's discretion and pleasure? It is most reasonable that we should thoroughly acquiesce in his determination: even a pagan philosopher could teach us that this is reasonable, who thus piously directeth his speech to God: *For the rest, use me to what thou pleasest. I do consent unto thee, and am indifferent. I refuse nothing which seemeth good to thee. Lead me whither thou wilt; put on me what garment thou pleasest. Wilt thou have me to be a governor or a private man, to stay at home or to be banished away, to be poor or to be rich? I will, in respect to all these things, apologize for thee with men.** Thus did Epictetus say, and such speech well becometh our relation to God: servants should be content with their master's appointments and allowances; they should not only themselves forbear to find fault with, but be ready to maintain his proceedings against any who shall presume to reprehend or blame them. Especially such servants as we are, who, *after we have done all things commanded us, must acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants;*[u] such as can bring no considerable benefit to our Lord, or anywise advance his state; such as, therefore, cannot challenge any wages from him, more than he out of mere favour is pleased to allow: could we by our labours enrich God, or raise him in dignity, or procure delight to him, it might seem congruous that he should answerably reward us; but as he getteth nothing by us, so we cannot require any thing from him: our best services do indeed rather need pardon, that deserve any reward: no man hath lived so well, that he can pretend any thing from God, that he is not indeed much behindhand in his accounts with God, having received from God far more of benefit than he can return to him in service: no man, without extreme presumption and arrogance, can offer to prescribe in what measure, or what manner, God should reward him.

Again, if we consider ourselves as the children of God, either by birth or nature, or by adoption and grace, how can we be discontent for any thing? Have we not thence great reason to hope, or rather to be confident, that we shall never want any good thing (necessary or con-

* Ἀθαίρετα πήματα.

[p] Lam. iii. 33. [q] Jer. v. 25.
[r] Psal. cvii. 17.
[s] Jer. xvii. 10; xxi. 14; xxxii. 19; vi. 19.
[t] Lam. iii. 39.

* Χρῆ μοι λοιπὸν εἰς ὃ ἂν θέλῃς. Ὁμογνωμονῶ σοι, ἴσος εἰμί. Οὐδὲν παραιτοῦμαι τῶν σοι δοκούντων. Ὅπου θέλεις ἄγε, ἣν θέλεις ἐσθῆτα περίθες. Ἄρχειν με θέλεις, ἰδιοτεύειν, μένειν, φεύγειν, πένεσθαι, πλουτεῖν; ἐγώ σοι ὑπὲρ ἁπάντων τούτων πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπολογήσομαι.—Arr. ii. 16.

[u] Luke xvii. 10.

venient for us), that no great evil shall ever oppress us? For is not God hence by paternal disposition inclined, is he not in a manner by paternal duty engaged, in all needful occasions to supply and succour us? Can we, without great profaneness, and no less folly, surmise, that he, which is so immensely good, will be a bad (an unkind, or a neglectful) Father to us? No; as there is no other father in goodness comparable to him, so none, in real effects of benignity, can come near him; so our Lord assureth us: *If ye*, saith he, *being evil, know how to give good things unto your children; how much more will our heavenly father give good things to his children that ask him?*[v]

If we consider ourselves as Christians, we have still more reason to practice this duty: as such, we are not only possessed of goods abundantly sufficient to satisfy our desires; we have hopes able to raise our minds above the sense of all present things; we have entertainments that ever may divert our minds, and fill our hearts with comfort: but we have also an assurance of competent supplies of temporal goods; for, *Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise both of the present life, and of that which is to come:* and, *If we seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us.*[x] It is indeed strangely unhandsome for a Christian ever to droop, or to be disconsolate; for a friend of God, and an heir of heaven, to think he wants any thing, or fear that he shall ever want; for him, whose treasure and heart are above, to be so concerned with anything here as deeply to resent it.

Again, if we reflect upon ourselves as rational men, how for shame can we be discontent? Do we not therein much disparage that excellent perfection of our nature? Is it not the proper work of reason to prevent things hurtful or offensive to us, when that may be done; to remove them, if they are removable; if neither of these can be compassed, to allay and mitigate them, so that we may be able well to support them? Is not its principal use to drive away those fond conceits, and to quell those troublesome passions, which create or foment disquiet and displeasure to us? If it cannot do this, what doth it signify? to what purpose have we it? Is not our condition really worse than that of brute beasts, if reason serveth only to descry the causes of trouble, but cannot enable to bear it? All the reasons we have produced, and all that we shall produce against discontent, will, if we are reasonable men, and reason availeth any thing, have this effect upon us.

Wherefore, considering ourselves, our capacities, our relations, our actions, it is most reasonable to be content with our condition, and with whatever doth befall us.

SERMON XXXIX.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.—*I have learned in whatever state*, &c.

III. FURTHER, if we consider our condition (be it what it will, how poor, how mean, how despicable and forlorn soever), we can have from it no reasonable ground of discontent.

1. Our condition in this world cannot, if rightly estimated, and well managed, be extremely bad or sorrowful; nothing here can occur insupportable, or very grievous in itself; we cannot, if we please, want any thing considerable, and the defect whereof may not be supplied, or supported by far better enjoyments. If we have high opinions of some things, as very excellent or very needful for us, it is no wonder, if we do want them, that our condition is unpleasant to us; if we take other things for huge evils, then, if they be encumbent on us, we can hardly scape being displeased; but if we thoroughly look through such things, and scan them exactly, valuing them not according to fallacious impressions of sense, or illusive dreamings of fancy, but according to sound dictates of reason, we may find that neither absence of the former, nor the presence of the latter doth make our condition much worse, or render our case deplorable.

We are, for instance, poor: that condition, rightly weighed, is not so very sad;

[v] Matt. vi. 11. [x] 1 Tim. iv. 8; Matt. iv. 33.

for what is poverty? what but the absence of a few superfluous things, which please wanton fancy, rather than answer need;*[a] without which, nature is easily satisfied, and which, if we do not affect, we cannot want? What is it but to wear coarse clothes, to feed on plain and simple fare, to work and take some pains, to sit or go in a lower place, to have no heaps of cash or hoards of grain, to keep no retinue, to have few friends, and not one flatterer? And what great harm in this? It is a state which hath its no small conveniences and comforts, its happy fruits and consequences;[b] which freeth us from many cares and distractions, from many troubles and crosses, from many encumbrances, many dangers, many temptations, many sore distempers of body and soul, many grievous mischiefs to which wealth is exposed; which maintaineth health, industry, and sobriety; disposeth us to feed heartily, to move nimbly, to sleep sweetly; which preserveth us from luxury, from satiety, from sloth and unwieldiness.† It yieldeth disposition of mind, freedom, and leisure, to attend the study of truth, the acquist of virtue. It is a state which many have borne with great cheerfulness; many (very wise men) have voluntarily embraced; which is allotted by divine wisdom to most men; and which the best men often do endure; to which God hath declared an especial regard; which the mouth of truth hath proclaimed happy; which the Son of God hath dignified by his choice, and sanctified by his partaking deeply thereof: and can such a condition be very loathsome? can it reasonably displease us?[c]

Again, thou art, suppose, fallen into disgrace, or from honour and credit art depressed into a state of contempt and infamy? This also rightly prized is no such wretchedness; for what doth this import? what but a change of opinion in giddy men, which thou dost not feel, which thou art not concerned in, if thou pleasest; which thou never hadst reason much to regard, or at all to rely upon? What is thy loss therein? it is the breaking of a bubble, the sinking of a wave, the changing of a wind, the cracking of a thing most brittle, the slipping away of a thing most fugacious and slippery. What is honour, and fame, but thought? and what more flitting, what sooner gone away, than a thought? And why art thou displeased at the loss of a thing so very slender and slim? If thou didst know its nature, thou canst not be disappointed; if thou didst not, it was worth thy while to be thus informed by experience, that thou mayest not any more regard it. Is the contempt thou hast incurred from thy fault? bear the consequence thereof patiently, and do thy best, by removing the cause, to reverse the effect: is it undeserved and causeless? be satisfied in thy innocence, and be glad that thou art above the folly and injustice of those who contemn thee; let thy affections rather be employed in pity of theirs, than in displeasure for thy own case. Did, let me ask thee again, the good opinion of men please thee? that pleasure was fond and vain, and it is well thou art rid of it: did it not much affect thee? why, then, dost thou much grieve at the loss thereof? Is not also thy fortune in this kind the same with that of the best men? have not those who have deserved most honour, been exposed to most contempt? *But now* (Job could say) *they that are younger than I, have me in derision——they abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.*[d] And, *I am* (could that great and good king say) *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head:*[e]——and, we are *defamed*, we are *reviled*, *we are made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things unto this day*,[f] could the holy apostle say; and, *He is despised and rejected of men——he was despised, and we esteemed him not*,[g] was said of our Lord him-

* Τὰ δ' ἀργυρώματ' ἐστιν ἢτε πορφύρα
Εἰς τοὺς τραγῳδοὺς χρήσιμ' οὐκ εἰς τὸν βίον —
Socrat.

* Si vis vacare animo, aut pauper sis oportet, aut pauperi similis.
Multis ad philosophandum obstitere divitiæ; paupertas expedita est, secura est.—*Sen. Ep.* 17.
Sæpius pauper et fidelius ridet.—*Sen. Ep.* 80.

[a] Tert. de Pat. 7.
[b] *Vide* Plut. in Arist.
[c] Psal. x. 14; xxxv. 10; lxviii. 10; lxix. 33; lxxii. 4, 13; cxl. 12; cxlvi. 7; cxlvii. 2; Luke vi. 20; James ii. 5; Isa. lxvi. 2.
[d] Job xxx. 1, 10.
[e] Psal. xxii. 6, 7.
[f] 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.
[g] Isa. liii. 3.

self: and can this condition, then, in just esteem be so very pitiful or grievous?

But thou art perhaps troubled because thou art wrongfully censured, odiously traduced and defamed, abused by slander or by detraction; which asperseth thee with things whereof thou art nowise guilty, or representeth thee in a character unworthy of thee:* be it so; what then? why doth this so much affect thee?

Is not every man subject to these things? are not the greatest men, are not the wisest men, are not the best men, liable to the same? yea, chiefly liable, excellency being the special mark of envy and obloquy? Can any good men escape free of them among so many bad men, whose doings, as goodness doth reproach, so it provoketh their malignity?† Canst thou imagine to pass thy days in so unjust and spiteful a world without incurring such bad usage? can so many vain, so many bold, so many lawless tongues be tied up, or kept within compass of truth or equity? Wilt thou suffer it to be in the power of any man at his pleasure so easily to discompose and vex thee? because he will be bad, shalt thou be miserable? Why dost thou not rather please thyself in the conscience of thy endeavouring to deserve and do well; in thy innocence, and clearness from the blame which they impose on thee; in thy having given no cause of such offence and outrage? why dost thou not rather pity their unworthiness and unhappiness, who stoop to so mean and base practices, than fret at them, as bad to thee? They do themselves far more mischief than they can do thee.

And why dost thou not consider, that indeed thou art guilty of many faults, and full of real imperfections, so that no man can easily derogate from thee more than thou deservest: he may indeed tax thee unjustly, he may miss in the particulars of his charge, he may discover groundless contempt and ill-will toward thee: but thou knowest thyself to be a grievous sinner, and it is just that thou shouldst be reproached (God, for thy humiliation or thy correction, may have ordered him, as David said he might have ordered Shimei, *to curse* thee;) thou hast therefore more need to be humble in reflection on thyself, than to swell with disdain in regard to his injury.

Thou shouldst improve this dealing, and make it wholesome to thee, by taking occasion thence to correct thy real faults, and endeavouring to become truly more worthy; that so thy conscience may be a firm bulwark against all detraction and obloquy: in fine, satisfy thyself by *committing thy soul with patience in well-doing* unto thy Judge, who assuredly will do thee right, will protect thy reputation, and clear thy innocence: his judgment is only worth regarding; be little concerned with any other.[h]

Again, being disappointed and crossed in the success of their projects, or undertakings, is wont to put men, as they conceive, into a woful case: but why so? why, let me ask thee, who art discontented upon this score, didst thou build much expectation upon uncertainties? didst thou not foresee a possibility that thy design might miscarry? and if so, why art thou not prepared to receive what happeneth? Was it not an adventure? why then art thou troubled with thy chance? Is he not a silly gamester, that will fret and fume at a bad cast, or at the loss of a game? Didst thou refer the business to God's disposal and arbitrement? if not, thou deservedst to be crossed, and rather confess thy fault, than complain of thy fortune: if thou didst so, then be consistent with thyself, and acquiesce in his determination: in fine, what is thy loss? is it of thy care and pain? would it have been much better, that thou hadst been careless or idle? But hast thou not in lieu of them got some wisdom and experience? hast thou not (if thy attempt was reasonable and worthy) exercised thy wit, thy courage, thy industry? hast thou not (by thy defeat) got an opportunity to express equanimity and patience? If thou so improvest thy disappointment, thou art a gainer by thy loss; thou *dost more than conquer* by thy defeat: however, since the gain, the credit, the preferment thou didst aim at, and hast missed, are things in themselves of no great value, and such as thou

* Exempl. Jeremiæ.—*Chrys. ad Olymp.* 16. Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit.—*Hier. Ep.* 39. (*ad Asellam.*)

† Ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἠδίκησαν, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἠδίκημαι.—Theod. Ep. 80.

[h] Theodor. Ep. 83.

mayest well live without, as other good men have done, thou canst not have much reason to be displeased upon this account, or to reckon thy condition very disastrous.

But friends, will some men say, have been unkind, have been ungrateful, have been fickle and false, have neglected, have deserted, have betrayed me: *It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it*,[i] &c. This is indeed commonly most grievous; yet, being scanned, will not render a man's condition so lamentable: for such misbehaviour of friends is more their calamity than ours:* the loss of bad friends is no damage, but an advantage; it is but the loss of a mischief, and a trouble: the fewer we come to have of such, the more time we save, the less trouble we meet with, the greater security we enjoy. The kindness we have showed, the obligations we have put on such, are not quite lost: they will bring the reward due to humanity and fidelity; it will yield satisfaction to us, that, however, we have been kind and faithful to them. The fidelity of remaining true friends may satisfy us: however, if all other friendships should fail, there is one remains, worth millions of other friends, who can never prove unfaithful or inconstant, who never will be unmindful of us, or deficient in kindness toward us.

The death of friends doth, it may be, oppress thee with sorrow.

But canst thou lose thy best friend?[j] canst thou lose the presence, the conversation, the protection, the advice, the succour of God; Is he not immortal? is he not immutable? is he not inseparable from thee? canst thou be destitute of friends, whilst he stands by thee? Is it not an affront, an heinous indignity to him, to behave thyself, as if thy happiness, thy welfare, thy comfort, had dependence on any other but him? is it not a great fault to be unwilling to part with any thing, when he calleth for it?[k]

Neither is it a loss of thy friend, but a separation for a small time: he is only parted from thee as taking a little journey, or going for a small time to repose:* within a while we shall be sure to meet again, and joyfully to congratulate, if we are fit, in a better place, and more happy state; *præmisimus, non amisimus;* we have sent him thither before, not quite lost him from us.†

Thy friend, if he be a good man (and in such friendship only we can have true satisfaction), is himself in no bad condition, and doth not want thee; thou canst not, therefore, reasonably grieve for him; and to grieve only for thyself is perverse selfishness and fondness.‡

But thou hast lost a great comfort of thy life, and advantage to thy affairs here: is it truly so? is it indeed an irreparable loss, even secluding the consideration of God, whose friendship repaireth all possible loss? What is it, I pray, that was pleasant, convenient, or useful to thee in thy friend, which may not in good measure be supplied here? was it a sense of hearty good-will, was it a sweet freedom of conversation, was it sound advice or kind assistance in thy affairs? and mayest thou not find those left, which are alike able and willing to minister those benefits? may not the same means, which knit him to thee, conciliate others also to be thy friends?[l] He did not alone surely possess all the good-nature, all the fidelity, all the wisdom in the world, nor hath carried them all away with him: other friends, therefore, thou mayest find to supply his room: all good men will be ready, if thou art good, to be thy friends; they will heartily love thee; they will be ready to cheer thee with their sweet and wholesome society, to yield thee their best counsel and help upon any occasion: is it not, therefore, a fond and unaccountable affection

* Jam sibi pœnas dedit qui peccavit.—*Sen. de Gr.* ii. 30.

[i] Psal. lv. 12.

[j] *Vide* Sen. Ep. 63.

[k] *Vide* Greg. Naz. Ep. 202.

* Οὐ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν ὁ πάντα ἄριστος ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου φωνὴν, ἀλλὰ καθεύδει ὕπνον τοῦ συνήθους μακρότερον.—Theod. Ep. 68.

Ἀποδημίαν τοίνυν παρακαλῶ μακρὰν τὴν τελευτὴν, &c.—Theod. Ep. 14.

† Cur doles si perisse non credis? cur impatienter feras subductum interim quem credis reversurum? profectio est quam putas mortem. —*Tert. de Pat.* 9; *Sen. Ep.* 63.

‡ Impatientia in ejusmodi et spei nostræ male ominatur, et fidem prævaricatur, &c.—*Tert. ibid.*

Ποῦ τὸ τῆς ἀγάπης ἀγαθὸν, ἑαυτῷ τὰ βίου διδόντα τῷ πλησίον ἀπονέμειν τὰ προσαντέστερα;—Naz. Or. 19.

[l] *Vide* Sen. Ep. 63.

to a kind of personality, rather than want of real convenience, that disturbeth thee?

In fine, the same reasons, which in any other loss may comfort us, should do it also in this: neither a friend, nor any other good thing, we can enjoy under any security of not soon loosing it; our welfare is not annexed to one man no more than to any other inferior thing: this is the condition of all good things here, to be transient and separable from us; and accordingly we should be affected toward them.

Fragile fractum est, mortale mortuum est.

But further, it perhaps displeaseth us, that the course of the world doth not go right, or according to our mind; that justice is not well dispensed, that virtue is under hatches, that worth is not considered, that industry is not rewarded, that innocence and modesty are trampled upon; that favour, partiality, corruption, flattery craft, impudence, do carry all before them; devouring all the encouragements due to honest industry: this may be observed, but why should it displease? art thou guilty of contributing to this? then mend; if not, then bear: especially seeing thou canst not help it; for so it hath always been and ever will be in the world, that things never have gone there as the wisest judge, or the best men, desire: there have never been good men enough to sway the world: nor will the few good men that are, be so active in promoting public good, as bad are in driving on their private designs. Doth not this course of things necessarily spring from the nature of men, which therefore we should no more be vexed at, than for that a serpent hath poison, or that a wasp hath a sting? we cannot wonder at it, why then should we be strangely affected by it? could any man ever have been pleased, if this were a sufficient cause of displeasure? However the world goes, we may yet make a tolerable shift; God is engaged competently to provide for us; that should satisfy us. God observeth these things no less than we, and he can easily hinder them, yet he thinketh good to suffer them; and shall not we do so likewise? There is, in fine, appointed a judgment hereafter, when all these things shall be redressed and set straight; when justice and virtue shall triumph, when integrity and industry shall find their due recompense: it is but a moment to that time, and till then we may rest satisfied.

Thus, if we do survey and rightly state things which cause discontent, and seem to render our condition hard and sad, we shall find, that not from the things, but from ourselves, all the mischief proceeds: we by our imagination give to the lightest things a weight, and swell the smallest things into a vast bulk; we fancy them very frightful and doleful, then we tremble and grieve at them. Mere names (the names of poverty, of disgrace, of defeat) do scare us, without consulting reason, and considering how little terrible the things are themselves. We follow silly prejudices, judging that highly good, which the vulgar admireth; that very evil, which the weakest sort of men are wont to complain of: hence so commonly doth our case seem grievous. But in truth there is no condition so bad, but if we manage it well and wisely, if we bend our mind to comply with it, if we moderate our passions about the accidents thereof, if we vigilantly embrace and enjoy the advantages thereof, may not be easily supportable, yea prove very comfortable to us: it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which do create the trouble which seemeth adherent to any condition, and embittereth every state; which from any slight occasion doth create vexation, and turneth every event into disaster.

2. As there is no condition here perfectly and purely good* (not deficient in some conveniences, not blended with some troubles,) so there is none so thoroughly bad, that it hath not somewhat convenient and comfortable therein: seldom or never all good things do forsake a man at once, or all mischiefs together assail him; somewhat usually abideth, which, well improved or wisely enjoyed, may satisfy a man, yea render his estate comparable to theirs who to vulgar eyes appear to be in the best condition: there is in every condition somewhat of good, compensating for its evils, and reducing it to a balance with other more plausible

* ——usque adeo nulla est sincera voluptas
Solicitique aliquid lætis intervenit.—*Ovid.*

states.* We are, suppose again, in poverty (that instance I propound usualy, as the most ordinary ground of discontent;) but have we therewith good health? then most rich men may envy us, and reasonably we should not exchange our state with many crazy princes: have we therewith our liberty? that is an inestimable good, which oftentimes the greatest men have wanted, and would have purchased with heaps of gold; have we therein a quiet mind, and a free use of our time? it is that which wisest men have prized above any wealth, and which the chief men of the world would be glad to taste of: have we a clear reputation? we have then the best good that any wealth can yield, we have more than many can obtain in the most splendid fortune: have we any friends sticking to us? that is more than the richest persons can assure themselves of, to whom it is near impossible to distinguish the friends of their person from the flatterers of their fortune; it is a privilege and solace which princes are hardly capable to arrive at: have we a bare competency, sufficient to maintain our life? we thereby keep our appetites in better compass, and our faculties in greater vigour;[m] we thence better relish all things; we in consequence thereof avoid the burdens, the diseases, the vices of sloth and luxury: have we further (as, if we are not very bad, we shall in this case assuredly have, humanity disposing all men thereto) the compassion of men? is not this somewhat better than that envy, that ill-will, that obloquy, which usually do attend wealth and prosperity? Why, then, if our poor state hath so manifold conveniences, do we so much distaste it? why do we so dwell and pore on the small inconveniences we feel under it, overlooking or slighting the benefits we may enjoy thereby? This indeed ordinarily is our folly and infirmity, that the want of any little thing, which we fancy or affect, doth hinder us from satisfaction in all other things: *One dead fly* causeth all our *ointment to stink*;[n] the possession of a kingdom will not keep us from being *heavy and displeased*,[o] as Ahab was, if we cannot acquire a small vineyard near us; on that one thing our head runs continually, our heart is wholly set, we can think on, we can taste nothing else; the want of that, notwithstanding all our affluence, doth pinch us; our danties thence do prove insipid, our splendours appear dim; every thing but that is a toy unto us: so capriciously and unaccountably prone are we to discontent.

3. Is our condition, let me ask again, so extremely bad, that it cannot be much worse? are we sunk to the bottom of all calamity? No, surely; God's providence will not suffer, the state of things here can never admit that to be: here are succours always ready against extremities; our own wit and industry, the help of relations or friends, the natural pity and charity of our neighbours, preserve us from them; especially persons in any measure innocent can never come near them: there will therefore never fail some good matter of content in what remains; a few good things, well improved, may greatly solace us. But, however, let us imagine our case to be the worst that can be: that a confluence of all temporal mischiefs and wants hath arrived, that we are utterly bereaved of all the comforts this world afforded; that we are stripped of all our wealth, quite sunk in our reputation, deserted of every friend, deprived of our health and liberty; that all the losses, all the disgraces, all the pains which poor Job sustained, or far more and greater than those, have together seized on us;* yet we cannot have sufficient reason to be discontent; for that nevertheless we have goods left to us in our hands, or within our reach, far surpassing all those goods we have lost, much outweighing the evils we do undergo: when the world hath done its worst, we remain masters of things incomparably better than it, and all it containeth; the possession whereof may, and, if we be wise, will abundantly satisfy us. We are men still, and have our reason left behind, which alone, in worth, exceedeth all the treasures of the world; in well using which, and thereby

* Assuescendum conditioni suæ; et quam minimum de illa querendum, et quicquid habet circa se commodi apprehendendum est: nihil tam acerbum est, ex quo non æquus animus solatium inveniat.—*Sen. de Tranq. An. cap.* 10.

[m] Prov. xxvii. 7. [n] Eccles. x. 1.

* Job, who ἐκίνωσεν αὐτοῦ (τοῦ διαβόλου) βελοθήκην ἅπασαν καταοξευόμενος ἐπ' αὐτοῦ, &c.—Chrys. ad Olymp. 2.

[o] 1 Kings xxi. 1

ordering all things for the best, we become more worthy, and more happy, than the most fortunate fool on earth; we may therein find more true satisfaction, than any wealth or any glory here can minister: we may have a good conscience left (the sense of having lived well heretofore, or at least a serious resolution to live well hereafter), and that is a *continual feast*,[p] yielding a far more solid and savoury pleasure, than the most ample revenue can afford: we may have hope in God (the author and donor of all good things), and thereby far greater assurance of our convenient subsistence and welfare, than all present possessions can bestow; we have reserved a free access to the throne of grace, and thereby a sure means (grounded on God's infallible word and promise) of obtaining whatever is good for us; we have a firm right to innumerable spiritual blessings and privileges, each of them justly valuable beyond whole worlds of pelf; we can, in a word (we can if we please), enjoy God's favour, which immensely transcendeth all other enjoyments, which vastly more than countervaileth the absence of all other things: of this, by applying ourselves to the love and service of God, we are infallibly capable; of this no worldly force or fortune can despoil us; we haveing this, our condition cannot be poor, contemptible, or pitiful; it is indeed thereby most rich, glorious, and happy: for how can he be poor, that hath the Lord of all things always ready to supply him; who hath *God*, as the Psalmist is wont to speak, to be *his portion forever?*[q] how can he be despicable, that hath the honour to have the Sovereign Majesty of the world for his especial friend? how can he be miserable, who enjoyeth the fountain of all happiness, who hath *the light of God's countenance* to cheer him, who hath the consolations of God's holy Spirit to refresh and revive him? what can he want, who, besides his present interest in all the needful effects of God's bountiful love, is an heir of heaven and everlasting bliss? Seeing, therefore, it is in our power to be religous; seeing we may, if we will (God's grace concurring, which preventeth us to seek, which never is withheld from those who seek it), be good Christians; seeing nothing can hinder us from fearing God, or can *separate us from his love*[r], neither can any thing render our condition bad or unhappy, really distressed or needy: *O fear the Lord* (saith the Psalmist) *for there is no want to them that fear him: the young lions* (or the rich,* as the LXX. render it) *do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing;*[s] and, *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing*,[t] saith the Wise Man; and *The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him*,[u] saith the prophet; and, *Who is he that shall harm you* (or do ill to you,† or make you worse), *if ye be followers of that which is good*,[v] saith St. Peter; and, *We know*, saith St. Paul, *that to them who love God, all things co-operate for good:*[w] and, *Godliness* (saith he again) *with contentedness is great gain;*[x] that is, supposing we have the goods which piety ministereth, although we have nothing more, we are, if we can be content, very well to pass; it is abundantly sufficient for us.

Why then, I pray, are we discontent? what do we groan or grieve for? what is it that we do want? is it the use of reason, is it virtue, is it God's favour? then indeed we have good cause to be displeased; for the want of those things is indeed lamentable: but if we do want them, it is only ourselves that we should complain of; for we may have them if we will, and who can help it, if we will not? Who, if we shall wilfully deprive ourselves of them, will be concerned to mind our complaints? But is it only a lump of trash, or a puff of honour, or a flash of pleasure, that we do need? Is it that we cannot so delicately glut our bellies, or so finely clothe our backs, or so thoroughly soothe our fancies, as we could wish, that we so pitifully moan? Is it being restrained in some respects from the swinge of our humour, is it that we are not so much regarded, or are slighted by some persons, is it that we are crossed in some design, that so discomposeth and discourageth us? then are we sottishly

[p] Prov. xv. 15.
[q] Psal. lxxiii. 26; xvi. 5; cxix. 57; cxlii. 5.

* Πλούσιοι ἐπτώχευσαν. LXX. † Ὁ κακώσων.
[r] Rom. viii. 39.
[s] Psal. xxxiv. 9.
[t] Eccles. viii. 5.
[u] Ezra viii. 22.
[v] 1 Pet. iii. 13.
[w] Rom. viii. 28.
[x] 1 Tim. vi. 6.

fond and childish in our conceits and our affections: for proper it is to children, whenas they want no solid or substantial goods, to wail for worthless toys and trinkets; it is for children, when they have not their will in petty and impertinent matters, to cry and lament; children are much affected with every word or little show that crosseth them: if we were (as St. Paul chargeth us to be) *perfect men*,[y] if we had manly judgments, and manly affections toward things, we should not so regard or value any of these temporal and transitory things, either good or evil, as by the want of one sort, or by the presence of the other, to be much disturbed; we should, with St. Paul, style any present evil, τὸ ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως, *a lightness of affliction;* we should, with him reckon, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glories which shall be revealed to us*:[z] we should, with St. Peter, *greatly rejoice, though for a season we are in heaviness, through manifold trials*,[a] or afflictions: we should esteem any condition here very tolerable, yea very good.

4. In truth (if we will not mince the matter, and can bear a truth sounding like a paradox), usually our condition is then better, when it seemeth worse; then we have most cause to be glad, when we are aptest to grieve; then we should be thankful, when we do complain: that it appeareth otherwise to us, it is because in our taxations of things we do ordinarily judge (or rather not judge, but fancy, not hearing or regarding any dictate of reason) like beasts; prizing things merely according to present sense or show, not examining their intrinsic natures, or looking forward into their proper fruits and consequences.

Adversity (or a state wherein we are not furnished with all accommodations grateful to sense or fancy; or wherein somewhat doth cleave to us offensive to those inferior powers of soul) is the thing which we chiefly loathe and abominate; whereas, in true judgment, nothing commonly is more necessary, more wholesome, more useful and beneficial to us; nothing is more needful, or conducible to the health of our soul, and to our real happiness, than it: it is the school of wisdom, wherein our minds are disciplined and improved in the knowledge of the best things, whence it is termed παιδεία, that is, instructive chastisement;* so David found it: *It is* (said he) *good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes;* and our Lord himself, ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε, *He learned obedience from what he suffered.*[b] It is the academy wherein virtue is acquired and exercised;† so God meant it to his people: *The Lord thy God* (saith Moses) *led thee this forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, and prove thee.* So the Wise Man saith, that *by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better;* and, *that stripes do cleanse the inward parts of the belly.* And, *It yieldeth* (saith the apostle) *the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.*[c]

It is the furnace of the soul, wherein it is tried, cleansed, and refined from the dross of vain conceits, of perverse humours, of vicious distempers: *When* (saith Job) *he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold;* and, *Gold* (saith the Wise man) *is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.*[d]‡

It is the method whereby God reclaimeth sturdy sinners to goodness, engageth them to seek and serve himself: so of the Israelites the prophet saith, *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them:* so Manasses, *when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the*

[y] 1 Cor. xiv. 20.
[z] 2 Cor. iv. 17; Rom. viii. 18.
[a] 1 Pet. i. 6.

* ——multoque in rebus acerbis,
Acrius advertunt animos ad religionem.
Lucret. iii. p. 64.

Καὶ γὰρ τὸν τύφον περισπᾷ, καὶ τὴν ῥᾳθυμίαν ἐκκόπτει πᾶσαν ἡ θλῖψις, καὶ πρὸς ὑπομονὴν ἀλείφει καὶ καλύπτει τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων τὴν εὐτέλειαν, καὶ πολλὴν εἰσάγει τὴν φιλοσοφίαν, &c.—Chrys. in 2 Cor. Orat. 26

† Miraris tu, si Deus, ille bonorum amantissimus qui illos quam optimos esse atque excellentissimos vult, fortunam illis cum qua exerceantur assignat?—*Sen. de Prov.* 2.

‡ Hence πειρασμὸς (trial) is the usual word signifying it—1 Pet. i. 6. &c.

[b] Psal. cxix. 71; 1 Cor. xi. 32,—Κρινόμενοι ὑπὸ Κυρίου παιδευόμεθα. Heb. v. 8.
[c] Deut. viii. 2; Eccles. vii. 3; Prov. xx. 30; Heb. xii. 11; James i. 3; Rom. v. 3.
[d] Job xxiii. 10; (Psal. lxvi. 10;) Eccles. ii. 5; Sap. iii. 5; (Isa. i. 25; xlviii. 10; Mal. iii. 23; Dan. xi. 35.)

God of his fathers :[e] so Nebuchadnezzar after being driven from his kingdom, *his understanding returned unto him, and he blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him that liveth forever ;*[f] so David himself, *Before* (said he) *I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*[g]

It is that whereby God doth prepare men, and doth entitle them to the blessed rewards hereafter : *Our light affliction* (saith St. Paul) *which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;** and, *Ye* (saith St. Peter) *greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations ;† that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*[h] Such is the nature, such the use, such the fruits of adversity.

It is indeed scarce possible, that, without tasting it somewhat deeply, any man should become in good measure either wise or good.‡ He must be very ignorant of himself (of his own temper and inclinations, of the strength and forces of his reason), who hath not met with some rubs and crosses to try himself and them with : the greater part of things he must little understand, who hath not experienced the worst part : he cannot skill to wield and govern his passions, who never had them stirred up, and tossed about by cross accidents : he can be no good pilot in matters of human life, who hath not for some time sailed in a rough sea, in foul weather, among sands and shelves : he could have no good opportunity of employing thoroughly, or improving his wit, his courage, his industry, who hath had no straits to extricate himself from, no difficulties to surmount, no hardships to sustain :* the virtues of humility, of patience, of contentedness, necessarily must be unknown to him, to whom no disgraces, no wants, no sore pains, have arrived, by well enduring which, those virtues are learnt, and planted in the soul : scarce can he become very charitable or compassionate to others, who never himself hath felt the smart of affliction, or inconveniences of any distress†; for even, as the apostle teacheth us, our Saviour himself was obliged *to suffer tribulation*, that he thence might become *merciful*, and *disposed to succour the afflicted.*[i] (No wonder, if he *that liveth in* continual *prosperity*[j] be a Nabal, churlish and discourteous, insensible of other men's grievances :) and how can he express much piety or love to God, who is not (in submission to God's will, and for his sake) put to suffer any thing grievous, or want any thing desirable ?‡ When can he employ any great faith or hope in God, who never hath any visible need of succour or relief from him, who hath other present aids to confide in ? How can he purely delight in God, and place his sole felicity in him ? How can he thoroughly relish spiritual things, whose affections are taken up by an affluence of other goods, whose appetites are glutted with enjoyment of other delights ? What but deprivation of these things can lay open the vanity, the deceitfulness, and slipperiness of them ? What but crosses and disappointments here can withdraw our minds from a fond admiration and eager affection toward this world ?§ What but the want of these joys and satisfactions

* Ἡ γὰρ τῶν πόνων ἐπίτασις, μισθῶν ἐπίτασίς ἐστι, καὶ ἔρεισμα ἀσφαλὲς πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἑκόντας ἐκπεσεῖν· καὶ γὰρ τύφων καταστέλλει, καὶ ῥᾳθυμίαν ἀποστρέφει, καὶ φρονιμωτέρους ποιεῖ καὶ εὐλαβεστέρους ἐργάζεται, &c. Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 9.

† ὑπομονῆς ἔχετε χρείαν, &c. Heb. x. 36.

‡ Nihil infelicius eo, cui nihil unquam evenit adversi, non licuit enim illi se experiri.—*Sen. de Provid.* 3.

Non fert ullum ictum illæsa felicitas.—*Ibid.*

[e] Isa. xxvi. 16 ; xxix. 19 ; Hos. v. 15 ; Psal. lxxviii. 34 ; cvii. 4, &c. ; lxxxiv. 16 ; 2 Chron. xxiii. 12.

[f] Dan. iv. 34. [g] Psal. cxix. 67.

[h] 2 Cor. iv. 17 ; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

* Quæ latet, inque bonis cossat non cognita rebus,
Apparet virtus, arguiturque malis.
Ovid. Trist. iv. 3.

† Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco. —*Æn.* 2.

‡ Cum molestiæ in hujus vitæ fragilitate crebrescunt, æternam requiem nos desiderare compellunt. Mundus quippe iste periculosior est blandus, quam molestus, et magis cavendus quum se illicit diligi, quam cum admonet, cogitque contemni.—*Aug. Ep.* 144.

§ Ardua nam res est opibus non tradere mores.—*Mart.*——Munera ista fortunæ putatis ? insidiæ sunt.—*Sen. Ep.* 8.——Viscat beneficia.—*Ib.*

[i] Heb. ii. 17, 18 ; iv. 15, 16.

[j] 1 Sam. xxv. 3.

can drive us to seek our felicity otherwhere? When *the deceit of riches* possesseth us, how can we judge right of things? when cares about them distract us, how can we think about any thing that is good? when their snares entangle us, and their clogs encumber us, how can we be free and expedite in doing good? when abundance fatteneth our hearts, and ease softeneth our spirits, and success puffeth up our minds; when pride, sensuality, stupidity, and sloth (the almost inseparable adherents to large and prosperous estates) do continually insinuate themselves into us, what wisdom, what virtue are we like to have?[k]

Seeing, then, adversity is so wholesome and useful, the remedy of so great mischiefs, the cause of so great benefits to us, why should we be displeased therewith?* To be displeased with it, is to be displeased with that which is most needful or most convenient for us, to be displeased with the health and welfare of our souls; that we are rescued from errors and vices, with all their black train of miseries and mischiefs; to be displeased that we are not detained under the reign of folly and wickedness, that we are not inevitably made fools and beasts. To be disgusted with Providence for affliction or poverty, is no other than as if we should be angry with our physician for administering a purge or for prescribing abstinence to us;† as if we should fret at our chirurgeon for searching our wounds, or applying needful corrosives; as if we should complain of the hand which draweth us from a precipice, or *pulleth us out of the fire.*[l] *Many benefits* (saith Seneca‡) *have a sad and rough countenance, as to burn and cut in order to healing;* such a benefit of God is adversity to us; and as such with a gladsome and thankful mind should we receive it.

If with a diligent observation we consult experience, we shall find, that as many have great cause to bewail that they have been rich, that they have been blinded and corrupted with prosperity, that they have *received their consolation here;*[m] so many have great reason to be glad that they have been poor, that they have been disappointed, that they have tasted the bitter cup; it having instructed and corrected them; it having rendered them sober and considerate, industrious and frugal, mindful of God, and devout toward him: and what we may rejoice in when past, why should we not bear contentedly when present? why should not the expectation of such good fruits satisfy us?*

Why should not such a condition, being so plainly better in itself, seem also better unto us? We cannot, if we are reasonable, but approve it in our judgment; why then are we not fully reconciled unto it in our affection?

SERMON XL.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.—*I have learned, in whatsoever state,* &c.

5. BUT further: Let our state be, as to quality, what it will, good or bad, joyful or unpleasant, we may yet consider that it cannot be desperate, it may not be lasting; for there is not any necessary connection between the present and the future: wherefore, as the present, being momentary and transient, can little trouble us, so the future, being unknown and uncertain, should not dismay us. As no man reasonably can be elevated with

* Gratulari et gaudere nos decet dignatione divinæ castigationis——O servum illum beatum, cujus emendationi Dominus instat; cui dignatur irasci, quem admonendi dissimulatione non decipit.—*Tert. de Pat.* 11.

Ὁ ἁμαρτάνων κἂν μὴ κολάζηται, πάντων ἐστὶν ἀθλιώτερος, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνέρ. 5.

† Ἡ νοσούντων ἰατρεία, ἢ ὑγιαινόντων γυμνασία. —Simp.

Κρείττων εὐημερίας ἀχαλινώτου νόσος φιλόσοφος. —Naz. Ep. 66.

‡ Beneficia multa tristem et asperam frontem habent, quemadmodum urere, et secare, ut sanes.—*Sen. de Benef.* v. 20.

[k] Matt. xiii. 22; 1 Tim. vi. 9; Luke x. 41; Deut. xxxii. 15; Prov. i. 32; xxx. 9; Hos. xiii. 6; Psal. xxx. 6; Jer. xxii. 21; Amos vi. 1, &c.

[l] Jude 23.

* Horrorem operis fructus excusat.—*Tert. Scorp.* 5.

Let our condition be what it will, we are the same. It doth not change us in our intrinsic worth or state. It is but a garment about us, or as weather.

——Ego utrum
Nave ferar magna an parva, ferar unus et idem.
Hor. Ep. II. 2.

[m] Luke vi. 24; James v. 1; Amos vi. 1, &c.

confidence in a good state, presuming on its duration (*Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth ;*[a]) so no man should be dejected for a bad one, in suspicion that it will abide long ;* seeing neither (considering the frequent viscissitudes that occur, and the flux nature of all things here) is each of them in itself stable ; and the continuance of each absolutely dependeth on God's arbitrary disposal ; and as God often doth overturn prosperity, to human judgment most firmly grounded, so he most easily can redress the, to appearance, most forlorn adversity ; and he, being especially *the helper of the helpless*, doth frequently perform it : as he *poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty ; so he raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill : he casteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble and meek : he sendeth the rich empty away, and filleth the hungry with good things. He maketh sore, and bindeth up ; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.*[b]

Considering, therefore, the reason of things, and the nature of God, if our state be at present bad or sorrowful, we have more reason to hope for its amendment, than to fear its continuance.† If indeed things went on in a fatal tract, merely according to a blind and heedless chance, or a stiff and unalterable necessity ; if there were no remedy from God's providence, or support by his grace to be expected ; (although even then there would be no reason to grieve or complain ; grief would be unreasonable, because unprofitable, complaint would be vain, because fortune and fate are deaf ;) yet our infirmity might somewhat excuse that idle proceeding ; but since *not a sparrow falleth to the ground : not a hair of our head perisheth ;*[c] nothing at all passeth otherwise than by the voluntary disposition of a most wise and gracious God ; since he doth always strictly view, and is very sensible of our griefs, yea doth in a manner sympathise with them (according to those pathetical expressions in the prophets, *His bowels sound*, and *are troubled ; his heart is turned within him ; In all their afflictions he was afflicted :*[d]) since he further hath by promise obliged himself to *care for us*, to support and succour us ; we have all reason to hope, yea firmly to believe (if at least we can find in our hearts to hope and to believe), that we shall, as soon as it is good and expedient for us, find relief and ease ; we shall have that *εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν*, that seasonable succour, of which the apostle to the Hebrews speaketh.[e]

Hope lieth at the bottom of the worst condition that can be : *The poor* (saith Job's friend) *hath hope ;*[f] and the rich can have no more : the future being equally close to both, the one can have no greater assurance to keep what he hath, than the other hath to get what he needeth ; yea, clearly the poor hath the advantage in the case ; for God hath more declared that he will relieve the poor man's want, than that he will preserve the rich man's store : if, then, we have in every condition a hope present to us, why do we *grieve as those who have no hope ?*[g] having ever ready the best anchor that can be to rest upon[h] (for in this rolling sea of human affairs there is no firmer anchor than hope), why do we let our minds be tossed with discontentful solicitudes and fears ? Why do we not rather, as the apostle enjoineth, *rejoice in hope*, than grieve out of despair ? why do we not, as the prophet adviseth, *hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord ?*[i] The effect of so reposing ourselves for the future on God's providence would be perfect content and peace, according to that of the prophet, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in*

* Multa intervenient quibus vicinum periculum vel prope admotum aut subsistat aut desinat aut in alienum caput transeat.—*Sen.*

† Τοῖς γε νοῦν ἔχουσι καὶ σώφρονι λογισμῷ κεχρημένοις οὐδὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἀδόκητον, οὐδὲν γὰρ τούτων σταθερὸν ἢ βέβαιον, &c.—Theod. Ep. 14.

Sperat adversis, metuit secundis,
Alteram sortem bene præparatum pectus.
Hor. Carm. ii. 10.

[a] Prov. xxvii. 1.

[b] Psal. lxxii. 12 ; cvii. 9 ; x. 4 ; cvi. 9 ; Job xii. 21 ; Psal. cvii. 40 ; Isa. xxv. 5 ; Job v. 11 ; Isa. ii. 11 ; Psal. xviii. 27 ; cxiii. 7 ; cvii. 41 ; Job v. 18 ; 1 Sam. ii. 7.

[c] Matt. x. 29, 30 ; Luke xxi. 18.

[d] Hos. xi. 8 ; Jer. xxxi. 20 ; Isa. lxiii. 9, 15.

[e] Luke xii. 29, 31 ; Heb. xiii. 5 ; Matt. vi. 33 ; Phil. iv. 6 ; 1 Pet. v. 7 ; Psal. lv. 23 ; xxxvii. 5 ; Heb. iv. 6.

[f] Job v. 16.

[g] 1 Thess. iv. 13.

[h] Heb. vi. 19.

[i] Rom. xii. 12 ; Lam. iii. 26.

thee;[j] and that of the Wise Man, *A patient man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him.*[k]

The truth is, and it seemeth very observable, in order to our purpose, that most discontent ariseth, not from the sense of incumbent evil, but from suspicion, or fear of somewhat to come: although God at present dispenseth a competency of food and raiment, although we are in a tolerable condition, and feel no extremity of want or pain; yet, not descrying the way of a future provision for us, answerable to our desires, we do trouble ourselves; which demeanour implieth great ignorance and infidelity:* we think God obliged in kindness, not only to bestow upon us what is needful in its season, but to furnish us with stores, and allow us securities; we must have somewhat in hand, or we cannot trust him for the future: this is that which our Saviour cautioneth against, as the root of discontent and sign of diffidence: *Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof*:[l] an advice no less pious, than manifestly full of reason and wisdom: for what a palpable folly is it to anticipate that evil which we would avoid; then, when we earnestly desire to put off sorrow, to pull it toward us; to feel that mischief which possibly shall never be; to give it a being in our fancy which it may never have in nature?† Could we follow this advice, never resenting evils before they come, never prejudging about future events against God's providence and our own quiet; constantly depending on the Divine care for us; not taking false alarms, and trembling at things which shall never come near us; not being disturbed with panic fears; no discontent could ever seize upon us: for the present is ever supportable; our mind cannot be overwhelmed by the pangs of a transitory moment.

If we need further encouragement for application of this remedy, we have manifold experiments to assure its virtue: as there are innumerable promises that none who hope in God shall be disappointed;[m] so there are many illustrious examples of those, whom God hath in remarkable manner and wonderful measure relieved from wants and distresses, raising them out of deepest poverty, contempt, and worldly wretchedness, into most eminent degrees of wealth and prosperity: *Look* (saith the Hebrew Sage) *into the ancient generations, and see; Who hath trusted in the Lord, who hath been ashamed? or who hath abiden in his fear, and hath been forsaken? or who hath invoken him, and he did overlook* (*or despise*) *him?*[n] If we look into those generations, we may there find Joseph, out of slavery and out of prison, advanced to be the chief governor of a most flourishing kingdom: Moses, from an exile and a vagrant, made the redeemer and commander of a populous nation: Job, out of extreme poverty and disgrace, restored to be in wealth and honour *twice* greater than *the greatest men of the East*:[o] Daniel, out of captivity and persecution, become president of the greatest monarchy on earth: David, raised out of great meanness to highest dignity, restored out of extreme straits into a most prosperous state; according to those words of admiration and acknowledgment, *O what great troubles and adversities hast thou showed me; and yet didst thou turn and refresh me, yea and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again: thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side.*[p] Thus hath God eminently done with divers; thus we may be assured that he will do competently with us, if with the like faith and patience we do, as they did rely and wait upon him.

6. But further, imagine or suppose that our condition (so irksome to us at pres-

* Πολλῆς μικροψυχίας ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῶν ὕστερον συμβησομένων, ἢ μηδὲ ὅλως συμβησομένων τὴν ἀθυμίαν ἤδη καρποῦσθαι καὶ κόπτεσθαι.—Chrys. ad Stagir. 2.

† Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius, et ante miseriam miser.—*Sen. Ep.* 18.

Ne sis miser ante tempus; cum illa quæ imminentia expavisti, fortasse nunquam ventura sint, certe nondum venerint, &c.—*Sen. Ep.* 13.

Quod juvat dolori suo occurrere? satis cito dolebis cum venerit.—*Ibid.*

Quoties incerta erunt maria, tibi save.—*Ibid.*

[j] Isa. xxvi. 3.
[k] Eccl. i. 23.
[l] Matt. vi. 34.
[m] Lam. iii. 25; Isa. xxx. 18; xl. 31; xlix. 23; Psal. xxv. 3; xxxvii. 9; ix. 10; 2 Chron. xxviii. 9; Ezra viii. 22; Amos v. 4; 2 Chron. xv. 2.
[n] Eccl. ii. 10
[o] Job xlii. 10; i. 3.
[p] Psal. lxxi. 18; lxix. 29; xviii. 36.

ent) will certainly hold on to the utmost; yet consider also that it soon will cease, and change of itself: since we are mortal, our evils cannot be perpetual; we cannot long be infested with them.

As it may debase and imbitter all the prosperity in the world, to consider that it is very fading and short-lived; that its splendour is but a blaze, its pleasure but a flash, its joy but as the *cracking of thorns*;[t] so it should abate and sweeten any adversity, to remember that it is passing away, and suddenly will be gone.* Put, I say, the worst case that can be: that it were certainly determined, and we did as certainly know it, that those things which cause our displeasure should continue through our whole life; yet since our life itself will soon be spun out, and with it all our worldly evils will vanish, why are we troubled? What is said of ourselves, must in consequence be truly applied to them: *They flee like a shadow, and continue not;* they are *winds passing, and coming not again;* they are *vapours appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away*;[r] they *wither like grass, and fade away as a leaf*;[s] they may die before us, they cannot outlive us; our life is but *a handbreadth*:[t] and can then our evils have any vast bulk? *Our age is as nothing*, and can any crosses therein be then any great matter? How can anything so very short be very intolerable?† It is but ὀλίγον ἄρτι λυπηθέντες, being, as St. Peter speaketh, *a little while yet aggrieved*;[u] it is but μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, *a small quantity, whatever it be of time*[u] (as the apostle to the Hebrews saith, that) *we need patience;* it is but τὸ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως, *an affliction for a present moment*;[v] and therefore, as St. Paul intimateth, *light* and inconsiderable, that we are to undergo.[w] We have but a very narrow strait of time to pass over, but we shall land on the firm and vast continent of eternity; when we shall be freed from all the troublesome agitations, from all the perilous storms, from all the nauseous qualms of this navigation; death (which may be very near, which cannot be far off) is a sure haven from all the tempests of life, a safe refuge from all the persecutions of the world, an infallible medicine of all the diseases of our mind and of our state: it will enlarge us from all restraints, it will discharge all our debts, it will ease us from all our toils, it will stifle all our cares, it will veil all our disgraces; it will still all our complaints, and bury all our disquiets; it will wipe all tears from our eyes, and banish all sorrow from our hearts: it perfectly will level all conditions, setting the high and low, the rich and poor, the wise and ignorant, altogether upon even ground;* smothering all the pomp and glories, swallowing all the wealth and treasures of the world.

It is therefore but holding out a while, and all our molestation, of its own accord, will expire: time certainly will cure us; but it is better that we should owe that benefit to reason, and let it presently comfort us:† it is better, by rational consideration, to work content in ourselves, using the brevity and frailty of our life as an argument to sustain us in our adversity, than only to find the end thereof as a natural and necessary means of evasion from it.

Serious reflection upon our mortality is indeed, upon many accounts, a powerful antidote against discontent; being apt to extirpate the most radical causes thereof.

Is it because we much admire these worldly things that we so much grieve for the want of them? this will quell that admiration; for how can we admire them if we consider how in regard to us they are so very transitory and evanid? How can we deem them much worth the having, when we can for so little time enjoy them, must so very soon quite part from them?

How can we dote on the world, seeing *the world* (as St. John saith) *passeth away, and the desire thereof*?[x]

* (Psal. xxvii. 13),—I had fainted, if I had not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

† Omnia brevia tolerabilia esse debent, etiamsi magna.—*Cic. Læl.*

* Ἴσος Χῶρος ἅπασι, πένησι τε καὶ βασιλεῦσι.
Πάντες ἴσοι νέκυες. Phocyl.

† Κρεῖττον ——
Ὃ μέλλεις τῷ χρόνῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦτο χαρίζεσθαι τῷ λόγῳ. Plut. ad Apoll.

[q] Eccl. vii. 6.
[r] 1 Chron. xxix. 15; Psal. lxxviii. 39; James iv. 14.
[s] Psal. xc. 5; Isa. lxiv. 6; xl. 6.
[t] Psal. xxxix. 5.
[u] 1 Pet. i. 6.
[v] Heb. x. 36, 37.
[w] 2 Cor. iv. 17.
[x] 1 John ii. 27; 1 Cor. vii. 31; Eccl. i. 3, &c.

How can we value any worldly glory, since *all the glory of men is* (as St. Peter telleth us) *as the flower of the grass*;[y] since (as the Psalmist saith) *man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish*?[z]

How can we *set our heart* on riches, considering that *riches are not for ever*, nor *can* (as the Wise Man saith) *deliver from death*;[a] that (as St. James admonisheth) *The rich man fadeth in his ways*;[b] that it may be said to any rich man, as it was to him in the gospel, *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee, and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall*?[c] How can we fancy pleasure, seeing it is but πρόσκαιρος ἀπόλαυσις, a very *temporary fruition*;[d] seeing, however we do *eat*, or *drink*, or *play*, it followeth, the *morrow we shall die*?[e]

How can we even admire any secular wisdom and knowledge, seeing that it is, as the Psalmist telleth us, true of every man, that *his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish*;[f] particularly it is seen that *wise men die* no otherwise than as *the foolish and brutish person perisheth*:[g] that, as Solomon with regret observed, *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are going*.[h]

Do we admire the condition of those, who upon the stage do appear in the state of kings, do act the part of wealthy men, do talk gravely and wisely like judges or philosophers for an hour or two? If we do not admire those shadows and mockeries of state, why do we admire any appearances upon this theatre of the world, which are scarce a whit less deceitful or more durable than they.

Is it an envious or disdainful regret, at the advantages of others before us (of others perhaps that are unworthy and unfit, or that are, as we conceit, no more worthy and capable than ourselves) that gnaweth our heart? Is it that such persons are more wealthy, more honourable, in greater favour or repute than we, that vexeth us? The consideration how little time those slender preeminences will last, may (if better remedies want due efficacy) serve toward rooting out that disease: the Psalmist doth several times prescribe it: *Fret not thyself* (saith he) *against evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb*:[i] and again, *Be not afraid when one is made rich, and when the glory of his house is increased: for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him*:[j] and he, being fallen into this scurvy distemper, did follow his own prescription: *I was* (saith he) *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked——until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end: surely thou didst set them in slippery places——How are they brought into desolation as in a moment*?[k] So likewise doth Solomon prescribe: *Let not* (saith he) *thine heart envy sinners*: why not? *because surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off*:[l] there will be a close of his undeserved prosperity, and a good success to thy well grounded hope. So whatever doth breed discontent, the reflection upon our mortal and frail state will be apt to remove it.

It was that which comforted Job, and fortified his patience under so grievous pressures: *All the days of my appointed time* (said he) *I will wait till my change come*:[m] he would not be weary, while he lived, of his afflictions, *because the days of man are few, and full of trouble*:[n] if they are *full of trouble*, and that be a saddening consideration; yet they are *few*, and that maketh amends, that is comfortable.

7. I add, that it is somewhat consolatory to consider, that the worse our condition is here, the better we may hope our future state will be; the more trouble and sorrow we endure, the less of worldly satisfaction we enjoy here, the less punishment we have to fear, the more comfort we may hope to find hereafter: for as it is a woful thing to have received *our portion*, to have enjoyed *our consolation in this life*, so it is a happy thing to have undergone our pain here. A pur-

[y] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [z] Psal. xlix. 12; lxxxii. 6.
[a] Prov. xxvii. 24; xi. 4. [b] James i. 11.
[c] Luke xii. 20. [d] Heb. xi. 25.
[e] 1 Cor. xv. 32. [f] Psal. xlvi. 4.
[g] Psal. xlix. 10. [h] Eccles. ix. 10; ii. 14.
[i] Psal. xxxvii. 1, 2. [j] Psal. xlix. 17.
[k] Psal. lxxiii. 8, 17. [l] Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.
[m] Job xiv. 14, 1. [n] Gen. xlvii. 9.

gatory under ground is probably a fable; but a purgatory upon earth hath good foundations: God is wont so to order it, that all men, that especially good men, shall undergo it; for, *What son is there whom the father doth not chasten? All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.*°

8. A like consolation it is to consider, that wealth and prosperity are great talents, for the improvement of which we must render a strict account, so that *to whom much is given, from him much shall be required;* so that they are, in effect, a burden, from which poverty includes an exemption: for the less we have, the less we have to do, the less we are responsible for; our burden is smaller, our account will be more easy.

9. I shall, in reference to our condition, and the nature of those things which cause our discontent, but propose one consideration more, or ask one question: What is it that we do want, or wait for?* Is it any good we want, which by our care and industry we can procure; is it any evil that afflicteth us, which by the like means we can evade? If it be so, why then do we not vigorously apply ourselves to the business;† why do we not, instead of idle vexation and ineffectual complaints, use the means offered for our relief? Do we like and love trouble? let us then be content to bear it, let us hug it and keep it close; if not, let us employ the forces afforded us by nature, and by occasion, to repel and remove it.

But if we grieve and moan, because we cannot obtain some good above our reach, or not decline some unavoidable evil, what do we thereby but palpably express our folly, and wilfully heighten our woe; adding voluntary displeasure to the heap of necessary want or pain; impressing more deeply on ourselves the sense of them? In such a case, patience is instead of a remedy,‡ which though it do not thoroughly cure the malady, yet it somewhat alleviateth it, preventing many bad symptoms, and assuaging the paroxysms thereof.* What booteth it to wince and kick against our fortune? to do so will inflame us, and make us foam, but will not relieve or ease us: if we cannot get out of the net or the cage, to flutter and flounce will do nothing but batter and bruise us.†

But further, to allay our discontents, let us consider the world, and general state of men here.

1. Look *first* upon the world, as it is commonly managed and ordered by men: thou perhaps art displeased, that thou dost not prosper and thrive therein; that thou dost not share in the goods of it; that its accommodations and preferments are all snapt from thee; that thy pretences are not satisfied, and thy designs fail: this thou dost take to be somewhat hard and unequal, and therefore art grieved. But if thou art wise, thou shouldst not wonder; if thou art good, thou shouldst not be vexed hereat: for thou hast not, perhaps, any capacity for this world; thy temper and disposition are not framed to suit with its way; thy principles and rules do clash with it, thy resolutions and designs do not well comport with prosperity here; thou canst not or wilt not use the means needful to compass worldly ends: thou perhaps hast a meek, quiet, modest, sincere, steady disposition; thou canst not be pragmatical and boisterous, eager and fierce, importunately troublesome, intolerably confident, unaccountably versatile and various: thou hast certain pedantic notions about right and wrong, certain romantic fancies about another world (unlike to this), which thou dost stiffly adhere to, and which have an influence upon thy actions: thou hast a squeamish conscience, which cannot relish this, cannot digest that advantageous course of proceeding; a scrupulous humour, that hampereth thee, and curbeth thee from attempting many things which would serve thy purpose; thou hast a spice of silly gener-

* Τῶν μὴ δυνατῶν ἐφίεσθαι ἀνδραποδῶδες καὶ ἠλίθιον, ξένου, θεομαχοῦντος ὡς μόνον οἰόντε, τοῖς δόγμασιν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ.—Epict. iii. 24.

† —— Πρᾴως φέρε μηδ' ἀγανάκτει,
Ἔᾶσθαι δὲ πρέπει, καθ' ὅσον δύνῃ.
Aur. Carm.

‡ ——Levius fit patientia
Quicquid corrigere est nefas. *Hor.*

° Heb. xii. 7; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

* Animus æquus optimum est ærumnæ condimentum.—*Plaut. Rud.*

† Ἐπὶ ζημίᾳ χρημάτων, καὶ θανάτῳ, καὶ ἀῤῥωστίᾳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς συμπίπτουσιν ἡμῖν δεινοῖς ἀλγοῦντες καὶ ἀθυμοῦντες οὐ μόνον οὐδεμίαν ἀπὸ ταύτης καρποῦμεθα παραμυθίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπιτείνομεν τὰ δεινά. —Chrys. Ἀνδρ. 3.

Οἱ δὲ τῷ πάθει δουλωθέντες οὐδὲν μὲν κερδαίνουσιν ὀλοφυρόμενοι, ἀνίαρῶς δὲ βιῶσονται, καὶ παροξυνοῦσι τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἡγεμόνα.—Theod. Ep. 15.

osity, which maketh divers profitable ways of acting (such as forging and feigning, supplanting others by detraction and calumny, soothing and flattering people) to be below thee, and unworthy of thee; thou thinkest thyself obliged, and art peremptorily resolved to observe strict rules of justice, of humanity, of charity; to speak as thou meanest, to do as thou wouldest be done to, to wrong no man anywise, to consider and tender the case of other men as thine own: thy designs are honest and moderate, conducible to (or at least consistent with) the public good, injurious or hurtful to no man; thou carriest on thy designs by fair ways, by a modest care and harmless diligence; nor canst be drawn to use any other, how seemingly needful soever, which do savour of fraud, violence, any sort of wrong or baseness: thou hast an honest pride and haughtiness of mind, which will not let thee condescend to use those sly tricks, crooked ways and shifts, which commonly are the compendious and most effectual ways of accomplishing designs here: thou art, in fine (like Helvidius Priscus), in thy dealings and proceedings, *pervicax recti*, wilfully and *peevishly honest:* such an one perhaps thou art, and such is thy way; and canst thou hope to be any body, or get any thing here? shall such a superstitious fop, such a conscientious simpleton, such a bashful sneaksby, so fantastic a philosopher, pretend to any thing here? No: thou art here *piscis in arido*, quite out of thy element; this world is not for *thee* to thrive in.*

This world is for worldlings to possess and enjoy: *It was* (say the Rabbins) *made for the presumptuous;* and although God did not altogether design it for them, yet men have almost made it so: they are best qualified to thrive in it, who can lustily bustle and scramble; who can fiercely swagger and huff; who can fawn; who can wind and wriggle like a serpent; who can finely cog and gloze; who can neatly shuffle and juggle; who can shrewdly overreach and undermine others;† those slippery, wily artists, who can veer any whither with any wind; those men of impregnable confidence, who can insist upon any pretences: who can be indefatigably and irresistibly urgent, nor will be repulsed or baffled by any means; those who have a temper so lax and supple, that they can bend it to any compliance advantageous to them; who have a spirit so limber, that they can stretch it any whither; who have face enough, and conscience little enough, to do any thing; who have no certain principles, but such as will sort with their interests; no rules but such Lesbian and leaden ones, that easily may be accommodated to their purposes;* whose designs all tend to their own private advantage, without any regard to the public, or to the good of others; who can use any means conducible to such designs, boggling at nothing which serveth their purpose; not caring what they say, be it true or false; what they do, be it right or wrong, so it seem profitable: this is called wisdom, prudence, dexterity, ability, knowledge of men, and of the world, and I know not what beside; in the Scripture, the *wisdom of the world*, and *of the flesh*, *craft*, *guile*, *deceit*, κυβεία, &c. For such persons, it is to flourish in this world: *Behold, these* (saith the Psalmist) *are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, and who increase in riches; they are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish:*[p] they it is who love the world, who seek it, who study and labour for it, who spend all their time, and employ all their care about it; and is it not fit they should have it?[q] is it not a pity they should miss it? is it not natural, that they *who sow to the flesh should reap from the flesh?* Should not they who use the proper means obtain the end? Should not they arrive at the place, who proceed in the direct road thither?

But for thee, who canst not find in thy heart to use the means, why dost thou hope to compass the end, or grieve for not attaining it? why dost thou blend and jumble such inconsistencies together, as

* Τὸ τοῦ ἤθους γαληνόν τε καὶ ἄτεχνον καὶ πρὸς τὰς τοῦ βίου στροφὰς ταῦτας ἀνεπιτήδειον.—Naz. Ep. 63.

† Quod facillimum factu est, pravus, et callidus bonos et modestos anteibat.—*Tac. Hist.* 1.

* Ἐφιάλτης στρατηγοῦ ὀνειδίσαντος αὐτῷ τὴν πενίαν, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον, ἔφη, διὰ τι οὐ λέγεις; ὅτι δίκαιός εἰμι.—Æl. xiii. 39.

[p] Psal. lxxiii. 12, 5, 7. [q] 1 John ii. 16.

the eager desire of this, and the hopes of another world? It becometh not such a gallant to whine and pule. If thou wilt be brave, be brave indeed; singly, and thoroughly: be not a double-hearted mongrel; think not of satisfying thy mind, and driving on other interests together; of enjoying the conceit of being an honest man, with the design of being a rich or great man: of arriving to the happiness of the other world, and attaining prosperity in this. Wouldest thou enjoy both these? what conscience is there in that? Leave rather this world unto those who are more fit for it, who seem better to deserve it, who venture so much, and take such pains for it; do not go to rob them of this slender reward; but with content see them to enjoy the fruits of their labour and hazard: be thou satisfied with the consequences of thy virtuous resolutions and proceedings: if it be worth thy while to live innocently, modestly, and conscientiously, do it, and be satisfied; spoil not thine expectations by repining at the want of those things which thy circumstances render incompatible with them: follow effectually the holy patriarchs and apostles, who, without regret, forsook all, and cheerfully went thither, whither conscience and duty called them: if thou art not willing to do so, why dost thou pretend to the same principles, or hope for the like rewards? But, leaving the consideration of the world as man hath made it, consider that this world is not, in its nature or design, a place of perfect ease and convenience, of pure delight and satisfaction.* What is this world but a region of tumult and trouble; a theatre of vanity and disasters; the kingdom of care, of fear, of grief and pain; of satiety, of disappointment, of regret and repentance? We came not hither to do our will, or enjoy our pleasure; we are not born to make laws for ourselves, or to pick our condition here:† No: this world is a place of banishment from our first country, and the original felicity we were designed to; this life is a state of travel toward another *better country*, and seat of rest: and well it is, in such cases (well it is, I say, for us, as exiles and travellers) if we can find any tolerable accommodation, if we can make any hard shift: it should not be strange to us, if in this our peregrination we do meet with rough passages, foul ways, hard lodging, scant or coarse fare; if we complain of such things, we do not surely consider where we are, whence we came, whither we are going; we forget that we are the sons of Adam, the heirs of sin and sorrow, who have forfeited our rest and joy upon earth; we consider not, how unavoidable the effects are of that fatal condemnation and curse, which followed our first transgression; we mind not that the perfection and purity of the blessings we have lost is not to be found on this side the celestial paradise.* This world is purposely made somewhat unpleasant to us, lest we should overmuch delight in it, be unwilling to part with it, wish to set up our rest here, and say, *Bonum est esse hic, It is good for us to be here.*

This life is a state of probation and exercise, like to that (which prefigured and represented it) of God's people in the wilderness, wherein God *leadeth us* through many difficulties and hazards, in many wants and hardships, to *humble and prove us*, in order to the fitting us for another more happy state.[r]†

No temptation, therefore (or affliction), *can seize upon us, but such as is human;*‡ that is, such as is natural and proper to men: it is the consideration which St. Paul useth to comfort and support us in troubles; and a plainly good one it is: for seeing *man* (as Eliphaz saith) *is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards;*[s] that nothing is more natural to any thing, than trouble is to us; if we are displeased therewith, we are in effect displeased that we are men; it implieth that we gladly would put off our nature, and cease to be ourselves; we grieve that we are come

* 1 Cor. x. 13,—Πειρατήριόν ἐστιν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ γῆς,—Job vii. 1; Chrys. ad Stag. 2. (p. 106.)

† Οὐ νενομοθετηκότες ἤλθομεν εἰς τὸν βίον, &c.—Plut. ad Apollon.

* Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐπίπονον φύσει, καὶ μοχθηρὸν ἡμῶν τὸν βίον κατεσκεύαζεν, ἵνα ὑπὸ ἐνταῦθα συνωθούμενοι θλίψεως, ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν μελλόντων λάβωμεν· εἰ γὰρ νῦν, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. 5.

† Λογίζεσθαι χρὴ, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τῶν ἐπάθλων, καὶ τῶν στεφάνων καιρὸς, ὁ μέλλων ἐστὶν αἰών· τῶν δὲ παλαισμάτων καὶ τῶν ἱδρώτων παρὼν.—Chrys. ad Stagir. 2.

‡ Πειρασμὸς ἡμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος,—1 Cor. x. 13; Eccl. xl. 1,—Ἀσχλία ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c.

[r] Deut. viii. 23.

[s] Job v. 7; *Vide* Max. Tyr. Diss. 25, p. 244.

to live in this world ;* and as well might we be vexed that we are not angels, or that we are not yet in heaven, which is the only place exempt from inconveniences and troubles, where alone *there is no sorrow, no clamour, no pain.*[t]

It hath always been, and it will ever be, an universal complaint and lamentation, that the life of man and trouble are individual companions, continually and closely sticking one to the other ;† that life and misery are but several names of the same thing ; that our state here is nothing else but a combination of various evils (made up of cares, of labours, of dangers, of disappointments, of discords, of disquiets, of diseases, of manifold pains and sorrows ;) that all ages, from wailing infancy to querulous decrepitness, and all conditions, from the careful sceptre to the painful spade, are fraught with many great inconveniences peculiar to each of them ; that all the face of the earth is overspread with mischiefs as with a general and perpetual deluge ;‡ that nothing perfectly sound, nothing safe, nothing stable, nothing serene, is here to be found : this, with one sad voice, all mankind resoundeth ; this our poets are ever moanfully singing ; this our philosophers do gravely inculcate ; this the experience of all times loudly proclaimeth : for what are all histories, but continued registers of the evils incident to men ? what do they all describe, but wars and slaughters, mutinies and seditions, tumults and confusions, devastations and ruins ? what do they tell us, but of men furiously striving together, circumventing, spoiling, destroying one another ? what do we daily hear reported, but cruel broils, bloody battles, and tragical events ; great numbers of men slain, wounded, hurried into captivity ; cities sacked and rased, countries harassed and depopulated, kingdoms and commonwealths overturned ? what do we see before us, but men carking, toiling, bickering ; some worn out with labour, some pining away for want, some groaning under pain ? And amidst so many common miseries and misfortunes, in so generally confused and dismal a state of things, is it not ridiculously absurd for us, doth it not argue in us a prodigious fondness of self-love, heinously to resent, or impatiently to bemoan our particular and private crosses ?* May not reasonably that expostulation of Jeremy to Baruch reach us ? *The Lord saith thus : Behold, that which I have built I will break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself ? seek them not : for, behold, I will bring evil on all flesh.*[u]

4. Again, if we more closely and particularly survey the states of other men (of our brethren everywhere, of our neighbours all about us), and compare our case with theirs, our condition hardly can appear to us so bad, but that we have many consorts and associates therein ; many as ill, many far worse bestead, than ourselves. How many of our brethren in the world may we observe conflicting with extreme penury and distress ; how many undergoing continual hard drudgeries to maintain their lives ; how may sorely pinched with hunger and cold ; how many tortured with grievous sickness ; how many oppressed with debt ; how many shut up under close restraint ; how many detained in horrible slavery ; how many by the wasting rage of war rifled of their goods, driven from their homes, dispossessed of all comfortable subsistence ! how many, in fine, passing their lives in all the inconveniences of rude, beggarly, sordid, and savage barbarism ! And who of us have, in any measure, tasted of these, or of the like calamities ? Yet are these sufferers, all of them, the same in nature with us ; many of them (as reason, as humility, as charity, do oblige us to believe) deserve as well, divers of them much better, than ourselves : what reason, then, can we have to conceive our case so hard, or to complain thereof ? Were we the only persons exposed to trouble, or the single

* It was the doom of man to eat his bread in sorrow all the days of his life ; Gen. iii. 17. —Eccl. i. 14, All is vanity and vexation of spirit.

† Ὁ *βίος ἀληθῶς οὐ βίος, ἀλλὰ ξυμφορά.* Βίος *γὰρ ὄνομ' ἔχει, πόνος δ' ἔργῳ πέλει.* Eurip.

Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri ?—*Aug.*

‡ Πλείη *μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν, πλείη δὲ θάλασσα.*—Hesiod.

[t] Apoc. xxi. 4.

* Ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes
Nemo recusat. *Sen. Troad.*

Ideo mihi videtur rerum naturæ, quod gravissimum fecit, commune fecisse, ut crudelitatem fati consolaretur æqualitas.—*Sen. ad Polyb.* 21.

[u] Jer. xlv. 4, 5.

marks of adverse fortune; could we truly say with the prophet, *Behold, if there be any sorrow like my sorrow;*[v] we might seem a little unhappy; but since we have so much good company in our conceived woe: since it is so ordinary a thing to be poor and distressed; since *our case is*, as the poet speaketh, *not rare, but commonly known, trite, and drawn out from the heap of lots offered to men by fortune;** since pitiful objects do thus environ and enclose us; it is plainly reasonable, humane, and just, that we should without murmuring take and bear our lot: for what privilege have we to allege, that we rather than others should be untouched by the grievances to which mankind is obnoxious? whence may we pretend to be the special favourites, minions, privadoes, and darlings of fortune? Why may not God well deal with us as he doth with other men? what grounds have we to challenge, or to expect, that he should be partial toward us? why should we imagine that he must continually do miracles in our behalf, causing all those evils, which fall upon our neighbors all about, to skip over us, bedewing us, like Gideon's *fleece*,[w] with plenty and joy, while all the earth beside is dry; causing us, like the *three children*,[x] to walk in this wide furnace, unscorched and unsinged by the flames encompassing us? Are we not men framed of the same mould, are we not sinners guilty of like offences, with the meanest peasant, the poorest beggar, the most wretched slave? If so, then a parity of fortune with any men doth become us, and may be due to us; then it is a perverse and unjust frowardness to be displeased with our lot; we may, if we please, pity the common state of men, but we cannot reasonably complain of our own; doing so plainly doth argue, that we do unmeasurably overprize and overlove ourselves. When once a great king did excessively and obstinately grieve for the death of his wife, whom he tenderly loved, a philosopher, observing it, told him, "That he was ready to comfort him by restoring her to life, supposing only that he would supply what was needful toward the performing it." The king said, "He was ready to furnish him with any thing." The philosopher answered, "That he was provided with all things necessary, except one thing:" what that was, the king demanded; he replied, *That if he would upon his wife's tomb, inscribe the names of three persons, who never mourned, she presently would revive:* the king, after inquiry, told the philosopher, that he could not find one such man: *Why then, O absurdest of all men*, said the philosopher, smiling, *art thou not ashamed to moan as if thou hadst alone fallen into so grievous a case; whenas thou canst not find one person that ever was free from such domestic affliction?** So might the naming one person, exempted from inconveniences, like to those we undergo, be safely proposed to us as a certain cure of ours; but if we find the condition impossible, then is the generality of the case a sufficient ground of content to us; then may we, as the wise poet adviseth, *solace our own evils by the evils of others*,† so frequent and obvious to us.

5. We are indeed very apt to look upward toward those few, who, in supposed advantages of life (in wealth, dignity, or reputation) do seem to transcend, or to precede us, grudging and repining at their fortune;‡ but seldom do we cast down our eyes on those innumerably many good people, who lie beneath us in all manner of accommodations, pitying their mean or hard condition;§ like racers we look forward, and pursue those who go before us, but reflect not backward, or consider those who come behind us: two or three outshining us in some slender piece of prosperity doth raise dissatisfaction in us; while the doleful state of millions doth little affect us with any regard or compassion: hence so general discontent

* ———Nec rara videmus
Quæ pateris; casus multis hic cognitus ac jam
Tritus, et e medio fortunæ ductus acervo.
Juv. Sat. xiii. 8.
Te nunc delicias extra communia censes
Ponendum, &c. *Juv. Sat.* xiii. 140.

[v] Lam. i. 12.
[w] Judges vi. 37.
[x] Dan. iii. 25.

* Ἔτι ὦ πάντων ἀτοπώτατε θρηνεῖς ἀναίδην, ὡς μόνος ἀλγεινῷ τοσούτῳ συμπλακείς, ὃ μηδὲ ἕνα τῶν πώποτε γεγονότων ἄμοιρον οἰκείου πάθους ἔχων εὑρεῖν.—Jul. Ep. 38.

† Παρηγόρει τὰ κακὰ δὶ ἑτέρων κακῶν.—Menand.

‡ Nulli ad aliena respicienti sua placent.—*Sen. de Ira*, iii. 31.

§ ———Neque se majori pauperiorum
Turbæ comparet, hunc atque hunc superare laboret:
Ut cum carceribus, &c. *Hor. Sat.* 1.

springeth, hence so few are satisfied with their condition,* an epidemical eyesore molesting every man: for there is no man, of whatsoever condition, who is not in some desirable things outstripped by others; none is so high in fortune, but another in wit or wisdom, in health, or strength, or beauty, in reputation or esteem of men, may seem to excel him: he therefore, looking with an *evil* or envious *eye* on such persons, and with senseless disregard passing over the rest of men, doth easily thereby lose his ease and satisfaction from his own estate: whereas, if we would consider the case of most men, we should see abundant reason to be satisfied with our own; if we would a little feel the calamities of our neighbours, we should little resent our own crosses; a kindly commiseration of others' more grievous disasters would drown the sense of our lesser disappointments.

If with any competent heedfulness we view persons and things before us, we shall easily discern, that what absolutely seemeth great and weighty, is indeed comparatively very small and light; that things are not so unequally dispensed, but that we have our full share in good, and no more than our part in evil;† that Socrates had reason to suppose, that *if we should bring into one common stock all our mishaps, so that each should receive his portion of them, gladly the most would take up their own, and go their ways*;‡ that consequently it is both iniquity and folly in us to complain of our lot.

6. If even we would take care diligently to compare our state with the state of those whom we are apt most to admire and envy, it would afford matter of consolation and content unto us. What is the state of the greatest persons (of the world's princes and grandees), what but a state encompassed with snares and temptations numberless;* which, without extreme caution and constancy, force of reason, and command of all appetites and passions, cannot be avoided, and seldom are? what but a state of pompous trouble, and gay servility; of living in continual noise and stir, environed with crowds and throngs; of being subject to the urgency of business and the tediousness of ceremony; of being abused by perfidious servants, and mocked by vile flatterers; of being exposed to common censure and obloquy, to misrepresentation, misconstruction, and slander; having the eyes of all men intent upon their actions, and as many severe judges as watchful spectators of them; of being accountable for many men's faults, and bearing the blame of all miscarriages about them; of being responsible, in conscience, for the miscarriages and mishaps which come from the influence of our counsels, our examples, &c.; of being pestered and pursued with pretences, with suits, with complaints, the necessary result whereof is to displease or provoke very many, to oblige or satisfy very few; of being frequently engaged in resentments of ingratitude, of treachery, of neglects, of defects in duty, and breaches of trust toward them; of being constrained to comply with the humours and opinion of men; of anxious care to keep, and jealous fear of losing all; of danger, and being objected to the traitorous attempts of bold malecontents, of fierce zealots, and wild fanatics; of wanting the most solid and savoury comforts of life, true friendship, free conversation, certain leisure, privacy, and retiredness, for enjoying themselves, their time, their thoughts, as they think good; of satiety, and being cloyed with all sorts of enjoyments: in fine, of being paid with false coin for all their cares and pains, receiving for them scarce any thing more but empty shows of respect, and hollow acclamations of praise† (whence the Psalmist might well say, *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree*

* Inde fit ut nemo, qui se vixisse beatum
Dicat, &c. *Hor. Sat.* 1.
Si vis gratus esse adversus Deos, et adversus vitam tuam, cogita quam multos antecesseris. —*Sen. Ep.* 15.
Nunquam erit felix, quem torquebit felicior. —*Sen de Ira*, iii. 31; *Vide ibid.*

† That at worst we are, Extremi primorum, extremis usque priores.—*Hor. Epist.* ii. 2.

‡ Εἰ συνενέγκαιμεν εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τὰς ἀτυχίας, ὥστε διελέσθαι τὸ ἴσον ἕκαστον, ἀσμένως ἂν τοὺς πλείους τὰς αὑτῶν λαβόντας ἀπελθεῖν.—Plut. Apol.

* Magna servitus est magna fortuna, &c.—*Sen. ad Polyb.* 26.

* Personata felicitas.—*Sen. Ep.* 80.

——— Adulandi certamen est, et unum omnium amicorum officium, una contentio quis blandissime fallat.—*Sen. de Benef.* vi. 30.—*Vide* optime disserentem.—*Vide* et de Clem. i. 19,—et ad Polyb. 26.

a lie;[y] a lie, for that their state cheateth us, appearing so specious, yet being really so inconvenient and troublesome.) Such is the state of the greatest men; such as hath made wise princes weary of themselves, ready to acknowledge, that if men knew the weight of a crown, none would take it up;* apt to think with pope Adrian, who made this epitaph for himself: *Here lieth Adrian the Sixth, who thought nothing in his life to have befallen him more unhappy, than that he ruled:*† such, in fine, their state, as upon due consideration, we should, were it offered to our choice, never embrace; such, indeed, as in sober judgment we cannot prefer before the most narrow and inferior fortune:‡ how, then, can we reasonably be displeased with our condition, when we may even pity emperors and kings; when in reality, we are as well, perhaps are much better, than they?

7. Further, it may induce and engage us to be content, to consider what commonly hath been the lot of good men in the world: we shall, if we survey the histories of all times, find the best men to have sustained most grievous crosses and troubles;§ scarce is there in holy scripture recorded any person eminent and illustrious for goodness, who hath not tasted deeply of wants and distresses. *Abraham, the father of the faithful*, and especial *friend of God*, was called out of his country, and from his kindred, to wander in a strange land and lodge in tents, without any fixed habitation. Jacob spent a great part of his life in slavish toil, and in his old age was in reflection upon his life moved to say, *that the days of his pilgrimage had been few and evil.*[z] Joseph was maligned and persecuted by his brethren, sold away for a slave, slandered for a most heinous crime, thrust into a grievous prison, where *his feet were hurt with fetters, and his soul came into iron.*[a] Moses was forced to fly away for his life, to become a vagabond in a foreign place, to feed sheep for his livelihood; to spend afterward the best of his life contesting with an obstinately perverse prince, and in leading a mistrustful, refractory, mutinous people, for forty years' time, through a vast and wild desert.* Job, what a stupendous heap of mischiefs did together fall and lie heavy upon him! (*Thou writest bitter things against me,*[b] he might well say.) David, how often was he plunged into saddest extremity, and reduced to the hardest shifts; being *hunted like a partridge in the wilderness*[c] by an envious master, forced to counterfeit madness for his security among barbarous infidels; dispossessed of his kingdom, and persecuted by his own most favoured son; deserted by his servants, reproached and scorned by his subjects!† Elias was driven long to sculk for his life, and to shift for his livelihood in the wilderness. Jeremy was treated as an impostor and cast into a miry dungeon; finding matter from his sufferings for his doleful lamentations, and having thence occasion to exclaim, *I am the man that have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath,*[d] &c. *Which of the prophets were not persecuted*[e] and misused? as St. Stephen asked. The apostles were pinched with all kinds of want, harrassed with all sorts of toil, exposed to all manner of hazards, persecuted with all variety of contumelies and pains that can be imagined: above all, our Lord himself beyond expression was *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, surpassing all men in suffering as he did ex-

* Antigonus. Nescitis amici, quid mali sit imperare, &c.—*Saturn. apud Vopisc.*

† Hic situs est Adrianus VI. qui nihil sibi in vita infelicius duxit, quam quod imperavit. *Lud. Juicciard. P. Jovius in vit.*

‡ Nihil difficilius quam bene imperare.—*Diocles. apud Vopisc. in Aureliano.*

§ Consider what calamities great, powerful, glorious men have endured; Crœsus, Polycrates, Pompey, &c.—*Sen. de Ira*, iii. 25.

Οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄριστοι πενία διέζων παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον. (Aristides, Phocion, Epaminondas, Pelopidas.)—*Æl.* xi. 9, 11, 43. Lamachus, Socrates, Ephialtes, Abel, Noe, &c.—*Chrys.* tom. vi. p. 107.

* Socrates, Cato, Regulus, Phocion, &c. Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit.—*Vide* Chrys. tom. v. Or. 27. p. 168; et tom. vi. Or. 10, p. 107.

† Νῦν καὶ πάλαι ἐξ οὗ γεγόνασιν ἄνθρωποι ἅπαντες οἱ τῷ Θεῷ φίλοι τῷ στυγνῷ καὶ ἐπιμόχθῳ καὶ μυρίων γήμοντι δεινῶν ἐκληρώθησαν βίῳ.—Chrys in Mart. Ægypt. t. v. 522.

Ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς ἤνθουν οἱ δίκαιοι, τοὺς ἀγίους ἅπαντας αὖτως ἤγαγεν ὁ Θεὸς διὰ θλίψεως.—Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or 27.

[y] Psal. lxii. 9. [z] Gen. xlvii. 9. [a] Psal. cv. 18,—Σίδηρον διῆλθεν ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ.
[b] Job xiii. 27. [c] 1 Sam. xxvi. 20.
[d] Lam. iii. 1.
[e] Acts vii. 52; 1 Cor. iv. and vii.

cel them in dignity and in virtue ;[f] extreme poverty, *having not so much as where to lay his head*,[g] was his portion; to undergo continual labour and travel, without any mixture of carnal ease or pleasure, was his state ; in return for the highest good-will and choicest benefits, to receive most cruel hatred and grievous injuries, to be loaded with the bitterest reproaches, the foulest slanders, the sorest pains which most spiteful malice could invent, or fiercest rage inflict,—this was his lot : *Am I poor?* so, may one say, was he to extremity ;* am I slighted of the world? so was he notoriously ; am I disappointed and crossed in my designs? so was he continually, all his most painful endeavours having small effect; am I deserted or betrayed of friends? so was he by those who were most intimate, and most obliged to him ; am I reviled, slandered, misused? was not he so beyond all comparison most outrageously?

Having all these, and many more, of *whom the world was not worthy*,[h] undergone all sorts of inconvenience, being *destitute*, *afflicted*, *tormented ;* and shall we then disdain or be sorry to be found in such company? *Having such a cloud of martyrs, let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*[i] Is it not an honour, should it not be a comfort to us, that we do, in condition, resemble them? If God hath thus dealt with those, who of all men have been dearest to him, shall we take it ill at his hands, that he, in any manner, dealeth so with us? Can we pretend, can we hope, can we even wish, to be used better than God's firstborn, and our Lord himself, hath been? If we do, are we not monstrously fond and arrogant? especially considering, that it is not only an ordinary fortune, but the peculiar character of God's chosen, and children, to be often crossed, checked, and corrected ; even pagans have observed it, and avowed there is great reason for it : *God* (saith Seneca) *hath a fatherly mind toward good men ; and strongly loveth them—therefore, after the manner of severe parents, he educateth them hardly*,[j] &c. The apostle doth in express terms assure us thereof; for, *whom* (saith he) *the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons—but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all* (that is, all good men, and genuine sons of God) *are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*[k] Would we be illegitimated, or expunged, from the number of God's true children? would we be divested of his special regard and good-will? if not why do we not gladly embrace, and willingly sustain adversity, which is by himself declared so peculiar a badge of his children, so constant a mark of his favour?* if *all* good *men* do, as the apostle asserteth, *partake thereof ;* shall we, by displeasure at it, show that we desire to be assuredly none of that party, that we effect to be discarded from that holy and happy society? *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.*[l] It is peculiarly the lot of Christians, as such, in conformity to their afflicted Saviour ; they are herein *predestinated to be conformable to his image ; to this they are appointed.* (*Let no man*, saith St. Paul, *be moved by these afflictions, for ye know, that we are appointed thereunto :*) to this they are called : (*if when ye do well*, saith St. Peter, *and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God : for even hereunto were ye called*,[m]) this is propounded to them as a condition to be undertaken and undergone by them as such ; they are by profession *crucigeri*, bearers of the cross; (*if any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me ; every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution ;*[n]) by this are they admitted into the state of Christians ; (*by many afflictions we must enter into the*

* Ἐκ γὰρ τῶν τρῶτον φύντῶν ἀνθρώπων μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος καιροῦ τοὺς τὸν ὅλιων ἐσπουδακότας σέβειν θεὸν ἐστιν εὑρεῖν παρὰ τῶν συμβεβιωκότων ἀνθρώπων ἠδικημένους, καὶ πλείστοις ἄγαν περιπεπτωκότας ἀναιροῖς.—Theod. Ep. 132.

[f] Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 93 ; Isa. liii. 3.
[g] Matt. viii. 20.
[h] Heb. xi. 38.
[i] Heb. xii. 1.

* Ecclus. ii. 1,—Τέκνον, εἰ προσέρχῃ δουλευειν κυρίῳ, ἑτοίμασον τὴν ψυχήν σου εἰς πειρασμόν.

[j] Sen. de Provid. c. 2.
[k] Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8.
[l] John xvi. 20.
[m] Rom. viii. 29; 1 Thess. iii. 3; Phil. iii. 10 ; 1 Pet. ii. 20, 21.
[n] Matt. xvi. 24 ; x. 38 ; 2 Tim. iii. 12 ; John xvi. 33.—Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλῖψιν ἔξετε.

*kingdom of heaven ;**) this doth qualify them for enjoying the glorious rewards, which their religion propoundeth ; (*we are coheirs with Christ ;* so that, *if we suffer together, we shall also together, be glorified with him ; if we endure, we shall also reign with him :*[o]†) and shall we then pretend to be Christians, shall we claim any benefit from thence, if we are unwilling to submit to the law, to attend the call, to comply with the terms thereof? Will we enjoy its privileges, can we hope for its rewards, if we will not contentedly undergo what it requireth? Shall we arrive to the end it propoundeth, without going in the way it prescribeth, the way which our Lord himself doth lead us in, and himself hath trod before us?

In fine, seeing adversity is, as hath been declared, a thing so natural to all men, so common to most men, so incident to great men, so proper to good men, so peculiar to Christians, we have great reason to observe the apostle's advice, *Beloved, wonder not concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as if some strange thing happened to you ;*[p] we should not wonder at it as a strange or uncouth thing, that we are engaged in any trouble or inconvenience here ; we are consequently not to be affected with it as a thing very grievous.

SERMON XLI.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11. — *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, &c.*

MOREOVER, considering the nature of this duty itself may be a great inducement and aid to the practice of it.

1. It is itself a sovereign remedy for all poverty and all sufferance ; removing them, or allaying all the mischief they can do us.[a] It is well and truly said by St. Austin, *Interest non qualia, sed qualis quis patiatur ; It is no matter what, but how disposed, a man suffereth :* the chief mischief any adversity can do us is to render us discontented ; in that consisteth all the sting and all the venom thereof ; which thereby being voided, adversity can signify nothing prejudicial or noxious to us ; all distraction, all distemper, all disturbance from it, is by the antidote of contentedness prevented or corrected. He that hath his desires moderated to a temper suitable with his condition, that hath his passions composed and settled agreeably to his circumstances, what can make any grievous impression on him, or render him any wise miserable? he that taketh himself to have enough, what doth he need? he that is well pleased to be as he is, how can he be better? what can the largest wealth, or highest prosperity in the world, yield more or better than satisfaction of mind? he that hath this most essential ingredient of felicity, is he not thence in effect most fortunate? is not at least his condition as good as that of the most prosperous?*

2. As good, do I say? yea, is it not plainly much better than can arise merely from any secular prosperity? for satisfaction springing from rational consideration and virtuous disposition of mind, is indeed far more precious, more noble and worthy, more solid and durable, more sweet and delectable, than that which any possession, or fruition of worldly goods, can afford :†[b] the *τὸ ἀφθαρτον τοῦ πραέος, καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος,*

* Quotam partem angustiarum perpessus sum qui cruci milito.—*Hier. ad Asel. Ep.* 99 ; Acts xiv. 22 ; *Vide* Greg. Naz. Ep. 201. (ad Theclam.)

† It is a privilege of Christians, in favour bestowed on them ; *ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη*,—Phil. i. 29.

Our glory,—Eph. iii. 13.

Ὑπομονῆς ἔχετε χρείαν,—Heb. x. 36.

Faith and Patience are consorts,—Heb. vi. 12 ; Apoc. xiii. 10.

[o] 2 Tim. ii. 12 ; (Phil. iii. 10.)

[p] 1 Pet. iv. 12.

* Cui cum paupertate bene convenit, dives est.—*Sen. Ep.* 2.

Nemo aliorum sensu miser est, sed suo ; et ideo non possunt cujusquam falso judicio esse miseri, qui sunt vere conscientia sua beati. Nulli beatiores sunt, quam qui hoc sunt quod volunt.—*Salv. de Gubern. Dei*, 1.

* Οὐ γὰρ τὸ ποιῆσαί τι χρηστὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ τὸ παθεῖν τι κακὸν πολλὰς ἔχει τὰς ἀμοιβὰς καὶ μεγάλα τὰ ἔπαθλα, &c.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. 3. *Vide* p. 73.

Οὐδὲν τῆς ἐν ἀλγηδόσιν ὑπομονῆς εἰς εὐδοκιμήσεως λόγον ἴσον· ἡ γὰρ βασιλὶς τῶν ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τῶν στεφάνων ἡ κορωνὶς αὕτη μάλιστά ἐστι.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. 16.

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 6,—Ἐστι δὲ μέγας πορισμὸς ἡ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας. Aug. de Civ. Dei, i. 8.

[b] *Vide* Epist. 6 ; et ad Olymp. Epist. 3 ; (p. 75 ;) de Josepho.

incorruptibility (as St. Peter speaketh) *of a meek and quiet spirit is before God of great price;** *before God*, that is, according to the most upright and certain judgment, it is the most precious and valuable thing in the world: *There is* (the philosopher could say) *no spectacle more worthy of God* (or grateful to him) *than a good man gallantly combating with ill fortune.* Not to be discomposed or distempered in mind, not to fret or whine, when all things flow prosperously and according to our mind, is no great praise, no sign of wisdom, or argument of goodness; it cannot be reckoned an effect of sound judgment or virtuous affection, but a natural consequent of such a state: but when there are evident occasions and urgent temptations to displeasure, when present sense and fancy do prompt and provoke to murmuring, then to be satisfied in our mind, then to keep our passions in order, then to maintain good humour, then to restrain our tongue from complaint, and to govern our demeanour sweetly,—this is indeed honourable and handsome; to see a worthy man sustain crosses, wants, disgraces, with equanimity and cheerfulness, is a most goodly sight; such a person, to a judicious mind, appeareth in a far more honourable and invidious state, than any prosperous man; his virtue, shining in the dark, is far more bright and fair: *this* (as St. Peter saith, in a like case) *is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God suffereth grief;*[c] if, in our case (we may say after him), a man, out of conscientious deference to God's will, doth contentedly undergo adversity, this, God is ready to take for an obligation on himself, and will be disposed in a manner to *thank him* (or to reward him) for it: this indeed amounteth to a demonstration, that such a person is truly wise and really good: so is the satisfaction of a contented poor man more worthy;† and it is no less more sweet and comfortable, than that of any rich man, pleasing himself in his enjoyments: contentedness satisfieth the mind of the one, abundance doth only satiate the appetites of the other; the former is immaterial and sprightly, the complacence of a man; the latter is gross and dull, like the sensuality of a beast; the delight of that sinketh deep into the heart, the pleasure of this doth only float in the outward senses, or in the fancy; one is a positive comfort, the other but a negative indolency in regard to the mind: the poor good man's joy is wholly his own, and home-born, a lovely child of reason and virtue; the full rich man's pleasure cometh from without, and is thrust into him by impulses of sensible objects.

Hence is the satisfaction of contented adversity far more constant, solid, and durable, than that of prosperity; it being the product of immutable reason, abideth in the mind, and cannot easily be driven thence by any corporeal impressions, which immediately cannot touch the mind; whereas the other, issuing from sense, is subject to all the changes inducible from the restless commotions of outward causes affecting and altering sense: whence the satisfaction proceeding from reason and virtue, the longer it stayeth, the firmer and sweeter it groweth, turning into habit, and working nature to an agreement with it; whereas usually the joys of wealth and prosperity do soon degenerate into fastidiousness, and terminate in bitterness; being *honey in the mouth*, but soon becoming *gall in the bowels.*[d] Nothing indeed can affect the mind with a truer pleasure, than the very conscience of discharging our duty toward God in bearing hardship, imposed by his providence, willingly and well. We have, therefore, much reason not only to acquiesce in our straits, but to be glad of them, seeing they do yield us an opportunity of immediately obtaining goods more excellent and more desirable, than any prosperous or wealthy man can easily have, since they furnish us with means of acquiring and exercising a virtue worth the most ample fortune; yea, justly preferable to the best estate in the world; a virtue, which indeed doth not only render any condition

* 1 Pet. iii. 4; Ecce par Deo dignum vir bonus cum mala fortuna compositus,—*Sen. de Provid.*

† Honesta res est læta paupertas.—*Epic.*

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ διὰ τὸν Θεὸν τι πάσχων μόνον εὐδοκιμεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ἀδίκως τι πάσχων, καὶ φέρων γενναίως, καὶ εὐχαριστῶν τῷ συγχωροῦντι Θεῷ οὐκ ἐλάττων τοῦ διὰ τὸν Θεὸν ταῦτα πάσχοντός ἐστιν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. στ'.

[c] 1 Pet. ii. 19.

[d] Apoc. x. 10; Job. xx. 20, 22.

tolerable, but sweeteneth any thing, yea sanctifieth all states, and turneth all occurrences into blessings.

3. Even the sensible smart of adversity is by contentedness somewhat tempered and eased; the stiller and quieter we lie under it, the less we feel its violence and pungency: it is tumbling and tossing that stirreth the ill humours, and driveth them to the parts most weak, and apt to be affected with them; the rubbing of our sores is that which inflameth and exasperateth them: where the mind is calm and the passions settled, the pain of any grievance is in comparison less acute, less sensible.

4. Whence, if others in our distress are uncharitable to us, refusing the help they might or should afford toward the rescuing us from it, or relieving us in it, we hereby may be charitable and great benefactors to ourselves; we should need no anodyne to be ministered from without, no succour to come from any creature, if we would not be wanting to ourselves, in hearkening to our own reason, and enjoying the consolation which it affordeth. In not doing this, we are more uncharitable and cruel to ourselves, than any spiteful enemy or treacherous friend can be; no man can so wrong or molest us, as we do ourselves, by admitting or fostering discontent.

5. The contented bearing of our condition is also the most hopeful and ready means of bettering it, and of removing the pressures we lie under.

It is partly so in a natural way, as disposing us to embrace and employ the advantages which occur conducible thereto: for as discontent blindeth men, so that they cannot descry the ways of escape from evil, it dispiriteth and discourageth them from endeavouring to help themselves; it depriveth them of many succours and expedients, which occasion would afford for their relief: so he, that being undisturbed in his spirit, hath his eyes open and his courage up, and all his natural powers in order, will be always ready and able to do his best, to act vigorously, to snatch any opportunity, and employ any means toward the freeing himself from what appeareth grievous to him.

Upon a supernatural account, content is yet more efficacious to the same purpose: for cheerful submission to God's will doth please him much, doth strongly move him to withdraw his afflicting hand, doth effectually induce him to advance us into a most comfortable state: of all virtues, there is none more acceptable to God than patience. God will take it well at our hands if we do contentedly receive from his hand the worst things: it is a monstrous thing not to receive prosperity with grateful sense, but it is heroical with the same mind to receive things unpleasant: he that doth so ζημιοῦται μὲν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, στεφανοῦται δὲ ὡς φιλόθεος, *he suffereth loss as a man, but is crowned as a lover of God.*[e] Besides that, it is an unreasonable thing to think of enjoying both rest and pleasure here, and the rewards hereafter; our consolation here with Dives, and our refreshment hereafter with Lazarus.

Be humbled (saith St. Peter) *under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time*[f] (ἐν καιρῷ, when it is opportune and seasonable;) and, *Be humbled* (saith St. James) *before the Lord, and he will exalt you;*[g] and, *When* (saith Job's friends) *men are cast down, then thou shalt say there is lifting up, and he will save the humble person.*[h] God with favourable pity hearkeneth to the groans of them who are *humbly contrite* under his hand, and reverently *tremble at his word:* he *reviveth the spirit of the humble;* he *is nigh to the broken of heart*, and *saveth such as are of a contrite spirit; he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds;*[i] he proclaimeth *blessedness to the poor in spirit*, and to *those that mourn;*[j] because they shall find comfort and mercy: all which declarations and promises are made concerning those who bear adversity with a submiss and contented mind; and we see them effectually performed in the cases of Ahab, of the Ninevites, of Nebuchadnezzar, of Manasses, of Hezekiah, of David; of all persons mentioned in holy scripture, upon whom adversities had such kindly operations. But discontent and impatience do offend God, and

[e] Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 89; *Vide* Chrys. ad Stag. 1, et 2, (p. 196.)
[f] 1 Pet. v. 6. [g] James iv. 10.
[h] Job xxii. 29; (Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14.)
[i] Isa. lxvi. 2; lvii. 15; Psal. xxxiv. 18; ii. 17; cxlvii. 3. [j] Matt. v. 3, 4.

provoke him to continue his judgments, yea to increase the load of them: to be sullen and stubborn is the sure way to render our condition worse and more intolerable: for, *who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?*[k] The Pharaohs and Sauls, and such like persons, who rather would break than bend, who, being dissatisfied with their condition, chose rather to lay hold on other imaginary succours, than to have recourse to God's mercy and help; those, who (like the refractory Israelites) have been *smitten in vain* as to any quiet submission or conversion unto God, what have they but plunged themselves deeper into wretchedness?

It is indeed to quell our haughty stomach, to check our froward humour, to curb our impetuous desires, to calm our disorderly passions, to suppress our fond admiration and eager affection toward these worldly things, in short, to work a contented mind in us, that God ever doth inflict any hardships on us, that he crosseth us in our projects, that he detaineth us in any troublesome state; until this be achieved, as it is not expedient that we should be eased, as relief would really be no blessing to us; so God (except in anger and judgment) will nowise grant or dispense it; it would be a cruel mercy for him to do it. If, therefore, we do wish ever to be in a good case as to this world, let us learn to be contented in a bad one: having got this disposition firmly rooted in our hearts, we are qualified for deliverance and preferment; nor will God fail in that due season to perform for us what he so often hath declared and promised; his nature disposeth him, his word hath engaged him to help and comfort us.

These are the most proper inducements unto contentedness, which, considering (in the light of reason and holy scripture) the nature of the thing, suggested unto my meditation: there are beside some other means advisable (some general, some more particular), which are very conducible to the production of content, or removing discontent; which I shall touch, and then conclude.

1. A constant endeavour to live well, and to maintain a good conscience: he that doth this can hardly be dismayed or disturbed with any occurrence here; this will yield a man so ample and firm a satisfaction of mind, as will bear down the sense of any incumbent evils; this will beget such hope in God, and so good assurance of his favour, as will supply the want of all other things, and fully satisfy us that we have no cause to be troubled with any thing here; he that by conscientious practice hath obtained such a hope, is prepared against all assaults of fortune with an undaunted mind and force impregnable: *He will* (as the Psalmist saith) *not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*[l] Maintaining this will free us from all anxious care, transferring it upon God; it will breed a sure confidence, that he will ever be ready to supply us with all things convenient, to protect and deliver us from all things hurtful; ensuring to us the effect of that promise, by the conscience of having performed the condition thereof: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*[m]

This was that which supported the apostles and kept them cheerful under all that heavy load of distresses which lay upon them: *Our rejoicing is this* (could they say) *the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity—we have had our conversation in this world.*[n]

It is the want of this best pleasure, that both rendereth the absence of all other pleasures grievous, and their presence insipid: had we a good conscience, we could not seem to want comfort; as we could not truly be unhappy, so we could hardly be discontent; without it, no affluence of other things can suffice to content us. It is an evil conscience that giveth an edge to all other evils, and enableth them sorely to afflict us, which otherwise would but slightly touch us; we become thence uncapable of comfort, seeing not only things here upon earth to cross us, but heaven to lower upon us; finding no visible succour, and having no

[k] Job ix. 4; Jer. ii. 30; v. 3; Isa. ix. 13; i. 5; xxvi. 10.

[l] Psal. cxii. 1; cxix. 6.

[m] Matt. vi. 33.

[n] 1 Cor. i. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 16; Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16.

hope from the power invisible; yea, having reason to be discouraged with the fear of God's displeasure. As he that hath a powerful enemy near cannot abide in peace, without anxious suspicion and fear; so he that is at variance with the Almighty, who is ever at hand, ready to cross and punish him, what quiet of mind can he enjoy? *There is no peace to the wicked.*

2. The contemplation of our future state is a sovereign medicine to work contentedness and to cure discontent: as discontent easily doth seize upon, and cleaveth fast to souls, which earnestly do pore and dote upon these present things, which have in them nothing satisfactory or stable;[o] so if we can raise our minds firmly to believe, seriously to consider, and worthily to prize the future state and its concernments, we can hardly ever be discontent in regard to these things. Considering heaven and its happiness, how low and mean, how sordid and vile, how unworthy of our care and our affection, will these inferior things appear! how very unconcerned shall we see ourselves to be in them, and how easily thence shall we be content to want them![p] What, shall any of us be then ready to say, doth it concern me in what rank or garb I pass my few days here? what considerable interest can I have in this uncertain and transitory state? what is any loss, any disgrace, any cross in this world, to me, who am a citizen of heaven, who have a capacity and hope of the immense riches, the incorruptible glories, the perfect and endless joys of eternity? This was that which sustained the holy apostles in all their distresses: *For this cause* (saith St. Paul) *we faint not—while we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal:* and, *I reckon* (saith he again) *that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*[q]

If likewise we do with faith and seriousness consider the dismal state below, of those who are eternally secluded from all joy and bliss, who are irrecoverably condemned to utter darkness and the extremity of horrible pain, how tolerable, how pleasant, how very happy, will the meanest state here appear to be! how vain a thing will it then seem to us to be, to dislike, or to be troubled with any worldly thing; to account any chance happening to us to be sad or disastrous! What, shall we say then, each of us, is this same loss to the loss of my soul and all its comforts for ever? what is this want to the perpetual want of heavenly bliss? what is this short and faint pain to the cruel pangs of endless remorse, to the *weeping and gnashing of teeth in utter darkness, to everlasting burnings?*

Thus infinitely silly and petty must all concernments of this life appear to him, who is possessed with the belief and consideration of matters relating to the future state; whence discontent, in regard to them, can hardly find access to his mind.

3. Constant devotion is an excellent instrument and guard of content, an excellent remedy and fence against discontent.

It is such in way of impetration, procuring the removal or alleviation of our crosses: for God hath promised that *he will give good things to those that ask him; The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth; he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry, and will save them. The poor man crieth, and the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of all his troubles;*[r] the holy scripture is full of such declarations and promises, assuring us of succour from our distresses upon our supplication to God; whence St. Paul thus adviseth against all solicitude: *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God: and* (addeth, signifying the consequence of this practice) *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.*[s]

It likewise performeth the same by procuring grace and aid from God, which

[o] 1 Thess. iv. 18; *Vide* Naz. Ep. 201; (ad Theclam.)

[p] 2 Cor. vii. 31.

[q] 2 Cor. iv. 16, &c. v. 7; Rom. viii. 18.

[r] Matt. vii. 11; Psal. cxlv. 18; James iv. 8; Psal. xxxiv. 6; cvii. 6.

[s] Phil. iv. 7; (Psal. xxv. 16; lxxxvi. 1, 4, 17; xliv. 23.)

may enable and dispose us to bear all evils well, which is really much better than a removal of them; for that hence they become wholesome and profitable to us, and causes of present good, and grounds of future reward: thus, when St. Paul *besought* God for deliverance from his thorn in the flesh, the return to him was, *My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness*:[t] it was a greater favour to receive an improvement of spiritual strength, occasioned by that cross, than to be quite freed from it.

Devotion also hath immediately of itself a special efficacy to produce content. As in any distress it is a great consolation that we can have recourse to a good friend, that we may discharge our cares and our resentments into his bosom; that we may demand advice from him, and, if need be, request his succour; so much more it must be a great comfort that we can in our need approach to God, who is infinitely the most faithful, the most affectionate, the most sufficient friend that can be; always most ready, most willing, most able to direct and to relieve us: he desires and delights, that *in the day of our trouble we should seek him;* that *we should pour forth our hearts before him;* that we should *cast our burdens and our cares upon him*;[u] that we should, upon all occasions, implore his guidance and aid: and complying with his desires, as we shall assuredly find a successful event of our devotions, so we shall immediately enjoy great comfort and pleasure in them.

The *God of all consolation* doth especially by this channel convey his comforts into our hearts; his very presence (that *presence*, in which the Psalmist saith *there is fulness of joy*) doth mightily warm and cheer us; his Holy Spirit doth, in our religious intercourse with him, insinuate a lightsome serenity of mind, doth kindle sweet and kindly affections, doth scatter the gloomy clouds of sadness; practising it, we shall be able to say with the Psalmist, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.*[w]

Humbly addressing ourselves to God, and reverently conversing with him, doth compose our minds and charm our passions, doth sweeten our humour, doth refresh and raise our spirits, and so doth immediately breed and nourish contentedness.

It also strengtheneth our faith, and quickeneth our hope in God, whereby we are enabled to support our present evils, and peace of mind doth spring up within us[x].

It inflameth our love unto God, in sense of his gracious illapses, thence rendering us willing to endure any want or pain for his sake, or at his appointment.[y]

It, in fine, doth minister a ravishing delight, abundantly able to supply the defect of any other pleasures, and to allay the smart of any pains whatever; rendering thereby the meanest estate more acceptable and pleasant than any prosperity without it can be. So that if we be truly devout, we can hardly be discontent; it is discosting from God, by a neglect of devotion or by a negligence therein, that doth expose us to the incursions of worldly regret and sorrow.

These are general remedies and duties both in this and all other regards necessary, the which yet we may be induced to perform, in contemplation of this happy fruit (contentedness) arising from them.—Further,

4. It serveth toward production of contentedness to reflect much upon our imperfection, unworthiness, and guilt; so as thereby to work in our hearts a lively sense of them, and a hearty sorrow for them: this will divert our sadness into its right channel, this will drown our lesser grief by the influx of a greater. It is the nature of a greater apprehension or pain incumbent, to extinguish in a manner, and swallow up, the sense of a lesser, although in itself grievous; as he that is under a fit of the stone doth scarce feel a pang of the gout; he that is assaulted by a wolf, will not regard the biting of a flea. Whereas, then, of all evils and mischiefs, moral evils are incomparably far the greatest, in nature the most ugly and abominable,

[t] 2 Cor. xii. 9; 1 Cor. x. 13.
[u] Psal. lxxvii. 2; xxvii. 8; cv. 4; lxii. 8; 1 Sam. i. 15; Psal. lv. 22; 1 Pet. v. 7; Psal. v. 8; xxvii. 11; xxxi. 3; xlii. 3; cxxxix. 24; cxliii. 10; lxi. 2; Jer. xxxi. 9.
[w] Psal. xvi. 11.
[x] Isa. xxvi. 3.
[y] Psal. lxxiii. 26; lxix. 16; xxiii. 4; lxxi. 20.

in consequence the most hurtful and horrible; seeing, in St. Chrysostom's language, *excepting sin, there is nothing grievous or terrible among human things; not poverty, not sickness, not disgrace, not that which seemeth the most extreme of all evils, death itself; those being names only among such as philosophate, names of calamity, void of reality; but the real calamity this, to be at variance with God, and to do that which displeaseth him;** seeing evidently, accordingly to just estimation, no evil beareth any proportion to the evil of sin, if we have a due sense thereof we can hardly be affected with any other accident; if we can keep our minds intent upon the heinous nature and the lamentable consequences of sin, all other evils cannot but seem exceedingly light and inconsiderable; we cannot but apprehend it a very silly and unhandsome thing to resent or regard them: what, shall we then judge, is poverty, in comparison to the want of a good conscience? what is sickness, compared to distemper of mind and decay of spiritual strength? what is any disappointment, to the being defeated and overthrown by temptation? what any loss, to the being deprived of God's love and favour? what any disgrace, to the being out of esteem and respect with God? what any unfaithfulness or inconstancy of friends, to having deserted or betrayed our own soul? what can any danger signify to that of eternal misery, incurred by offending God? what pressure can weigh against the load of guilt, or what pain equal that of stinging remorse? in fine, what condition can be so bad as that of a wretched sinner? any case surely is tolerable, is desirable, is lovely and sweet, in comparison to this: would to God, may a man in this case reasonably say, that I were poor and forlorn as any beggar; that I were covered all over with blotches and blains as any lazar; that I were bound to pass my days in an hospital or a dungeon; might I be chained to an oar, might I lie upon the rack, so I were clear and innocent: such thoughts and affections, if reflecting on our sinful doings and state do suggest and impress, what place can there be for resentment of other petty crosses?

Contrition also upon this score is productive of a certain sweetness and joy, apt to quash or to allay all worldly grief: as *it worketh a salutary repentance, not to be repented of*,[z] so it therewith breedeth a satisfactory comfort, which doth ever attend repentance: he that is very sensible of his guilt, cannot but consequently much value the remedy thereof, mercy; and thence earnestly be moved to seek it; then, in contemplation of divine goodness, and considering God's gracious promises, will be apt to conceive faith and hope, upon his imploring mercy, and resolution to amend; thence will spring up a cheerful satisfaction, so possessing the heart, as to expel or to exclude other displeasures: a holy and a worldly sadness cannot well consist together.

5. Another good instrument of contentedness is sedulous application of our minds to honest employments. Honest studies and cares divert our minds, and drive sad thoughts from them: they cheer our spirits with wholesome food and pleasant entertainments; they yield good fruits, and a success accompanied with satisfaction, which will extinguish or temper discontent: while we are studious or active, discontent cannot easily creep in, and soon will be stifled.

Idleness is the great mother and the nurse of discontent: it layeth the mind open for melancholy conceits to enter; it yieldeth harbour to them, and entertainment there; it depriveth of all the remedies and allays which buisness affordeth.

Reciprocally, discontent also begetteth idleness, and by it groweth;* they are like ice and water, arising each out of the other: we should therefore not suffer any sadness so to encroach upon us, as to hinder us from attending to our business (the honest works and studies of our calling), for it thereby will grow stronger and more hardly vincible.

6. A like expediment to remove discontent is good company.† It not only sometimes ministereth advices and arguments for content, but raiseth the drooping spirit, erecting it to a loving com-

* Οὐδὲν δεινὸν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, ἀλλ' ἡ ἁμαρτία μόνη· οὐ πενία, οὐ νόσος, οὐχ ὕβρις, οὐκ ἐπήρεια, οὐκ ἀτιμία, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ε'. τ. 6.—*Vide* ad Olymp. Ep. 13, ad Theod. 1.

* Mater me genuit.

† Ἀγαθὴ δὲ παραίφασίς ἐστιν ἑταίρου.

[z] 2 Cor. vii. 10,—*Vide* Chrys. ad Demet et ad Steletch. tom. 6.

plaisance, drawing it out towards others in expressions of kindness, and yielding delight in those which we receive from others, infecting us by a kind of contagion with good humour, and instilling pleasant ideas into our fancy, agreeably diverting us from sad and irksome thoughts: discontent affecteth retirement and solitude, as its element and food; good company partly starveth it, by smothering sad thoughts, partly cureth it by exhilarating discourse. No man hardly can feel displeasure, while friendly conversation entertaineth him; no man returneth from it without some refreshment and ease of mind.

7. Having right and lowly conceits of ourselves, is a most sure guardian and procurer of content: for answerable to a man's judgment of himself are his resentments of the dealing he meeteth with from God or man. He that thinks meanly, as he ought, of himself, will not easily be offended at any thing: any thing, will he think, is good enough for me; I deserve nothing from God, I cannot deserve much of man; if I have any competence of provision for my life, any tolerable usage, any respect, it is more than my due; I am bound to be thankful. But he that conceiteth highly, (that is, vainly) of himself, nothing will satisfy him; nothing, thinks he, is good enough for him, or answerable to his deserts; nobody can yield him sufficient respect; any small neglect disturbeth and enrageth him: he cannot endure that any man should thwart his interest, should cross his humour, should dissent from his opinion; hence, seeing the world will not easily be induced to conceit of him as he doth of himself, nor to comply with his humours and pretences, it is impossible that he should be content.

8. It conduceth to this purpose to contemplate and resent the public state of things, the interest of the world, of our country, of God's church. The sense of public calamities will drown that of private, as unworthy to be considered or compared with them; the sense of public prosperity will allay that of particular misfortune. How (will a wise and good man say) can I desire to prosper and flourish, while the state is in danger or distress? how can I grieve, seeing my country is in good condition? is it just, is it handsome, that I should be a nonconformist either in the public sorrow or joy? Indeed,

9. All hearty charity doth greatly alleviate discontent. If we bear such a goodwill to our neighbour, as to have a sincere compassion of his evils and complacence in his good, our case will not much afflict us. If we can appropiate and enjoy the prosperity, the wealth, the reputation of our neighbour, by delighting in them, what can we want, what can displease us? If our heart is enlaged in pity for the misfortunes of others, it cannot be contracted with grief for our own: our sorrow, like water, being thus diffused, cannot be so deep, but it will be more fruitful; it will produce such effects as will comfort and please us: it is a stingy selfishness which maketh us so very sensible of crosses, and so uncapable of comfort.

10. Again, if we will attain contentment, we must take heed of setting our affection upon any worldly thing whatever, so as very highly to prize it, very passionately to effect it, very eagerly to pursue it; so as to conceive our happiness in any measure to hang on it or stick thereto: if there be any such thing, we shall be disappointed in the acquist or the retention of it; or we shall be dissatisfied in its enjoyment.

So to adhere in affection to any thing is an adulterous disloyalty toward our Maker and best Friend, from which it is expedient that we should be reclaimed; whence God, in just anger or in kind mercy, will be apt to cross us in our attempts to get it, or to deprive us of its possession; whence the displeasure will follow, which always attendeth a separation from things we love. But if we be suffered to obtain or to retain it, we shall soon find dissatisfaction therein; being either disgusted with some bitterness in it (such as doth lurk in every sensible good), or being cloyed with its lusciousness: it after a small enjoyment will become either distasteful or insipid.

This, according to continual experience, is the nature of all things, pleasant only to sense or fancy, presently to satiate: no beauty can long please the eye, no melody the ear, no delicacy the palate, no curiosity the fancy; a little time doth waste away, a small use doth wear out, the pleasure which at first they afford:

novelty commendeth and ingratiateth them; distance representeth them fair and lovely; the want or absence of them rendereth them desirable; but the presence of them dulleth their grace, the possession of them deadeneth the appetite to them.

New objects with a gentle and grateful touch warble upon the coporeal organs, or excite the spirits into a pleasant frisk of motion; but when use hath levigated the organs, and made the way so smooth and easy that the spirits pass without any stop, those objects are no longer felt, or very faintly; so that the pleasure ceaseth.

Only those things which reason (religious and sound reason) doth approve, do yield a lasting (undecaying, unalterable) satisfaction: if we set our affections on them, we cannot fail of content; in seeking them, we cannot be disappointed; for God (without any reservation or exception) hath promised to bestow them upon those who seriously and diligently seek them: nor can we be dispossessed of them; God will not take them away, and they lie beyond the reach of any other hand: having them, then, we cannot but fully and durably be satisfied in the fruition of them: the longer we have them, the more we shall like them; the more we taste them, the better we shall relish them; time wasteth not, but improveth the sense of their unfading beauty and indefectible sweetness.

11. It is of great influence toward contentedness, with an earnest and impartial regard to contemplate things as they are in themselves, divested of tragical appearances, in which they are wrapt by our own inconsiderate fancy, or which vulgar prejudices do throw upon them: as all things, looked upon by the corporeal eye through a mist, do seem bigger than in reality they are; so to the eye of our mind all things (both good and evil) seem hugely enlarged, when viewed through the fogs of our dusky imagination or of popular conceit. If we will esteem that very good, which with a gay appearance dazzleth our imagination, or which the common admiration and applause of men recommendeth, the most vain and worthless, the most dangerous, the most mischievous things often will appear such, and if we please to account those things greatly bad, which look ugly or horridly to imagination, which are defamed by the injudicious part of men, or which men commonly do loathe, do fret at, do wail for, we shall take the best, most innocent, most useful, most wholesome things for such; and accordingly these errors of our minds will be followed by a perverse practice, productive of dissatisfaction and displeasure to us. No man ever will be satisfied, who values things according to the price which fancy setteth on them, or according to the rate they bear in the common market; who distinguisheth not between good and famous, bad and infamous; who is affected accordingly with the want of those things which men call good, with the presence of those which they term bad.

But if we judge of things as God declareth, as impartial and cautious reason dictateth, as experience diligently observed (by their fruits and consequences) discovereth them to be, we shall have little cause to be affected by the want or presence of any such thing which is wont to produce discontent.

12. We should to this purpose take especial care to search out through our condition, and pick thence the good that is therein, making the best we can of it, enjoying and improving it; but what is inconvenient or offensive therein, declining it, diminishing it, tempering it so well as we may, always forbearing to aggravate it. There are in nature divers simples, which have in them some part or some juice very noxious, which being severed and cast away, the rest becometh wholesome food; neither indeed is there any thing in nature so venomous, but that from it, by art and industry, may be extracted somewhat medicinal and of good use when duly applied; so in most apparent evils lieth enclosed much good, which if we carefully separate (casting away the intermixed dross and refuse), we shall find benefit, and taste comfort thence; there is nothing so thoroughly bad, as, being well ordered and opportunely ministered, will not do us much good: so if from poverty we cast away or bear quietly that which a little pincheth the sense or grateth on the fancy, and enjoy the undistractedness of mind, the liberty, the leisure, the health, the security from envy, obloquy, strife, which it affordeth,

how satisfactory may it become to us! The like conveniences are in disgrace, disappointment, and other such evils, which being improved may endear them to us: even sin itself (the worst of evils, the only true evil) may yield great benefits to us: it may render us sober and lowly in our own eyes, devout in imploring mercy, and thankful to God for it; merciful and charitable toward others in our opinions and censures; more laborious in our good practice, and watchful over our steps: and if this deadly poison well administered yieldeth effects so exceedingly beneficial and salutary, what many other harmless (though unhandsome and unpleasant) things do, being skilfully managed!

13. It is a most effectual means of producing content, and curing discontent, to rouse and fortify our faith in God, by, with most serious attention, reflecting upon the arguments and experiments which assure us concerning God's particular providence over all, over us. It is really infidelity (in whole or in part, no faith, or a small and weak faith) which is at the root, as of all sin, so particularly of discontent: for how is it possible, did we firmly believe, and with any measure of attention consider, that God taketh care of us, that he tendereth our good, that he is ready at hand to succour us (how then, I say, is it possible), that we should fear any want, or grievously resent any thing incident? But we, like St. Peter, are ὀλιγόπιστοι, *of little faith*, therefore we cannot *walk on the sea*, but in despair sink down: sometimes our faith is buried in oblivion or carelessness; we forget, or mind not that there is a Providence; but look on things as if they fell out casually or fatally; thence expect no redress from Heaven, so tumble into despair and disconsolateness. Sometimes, because God doth not, in our time, and our way relieve us or gratify us, we slip into profane doubt, questioning in our hearts whether he doth indeed regard us, or whether any relief is to be expected from him; not considering, that only God can tell when and how it is best to proceed; that often it is not expedient our wishes should be granted; that we are not wise enough or just enough to appoint or choose for ourselves; that it is impossible for God to gratify every man; that it would be a mad world, if God in his government thereof should satisfy all our desires.

We forget how often God hath succoured us in our needs and straits, how continually he hath provided for us, how patiently and mercifully he hath borne with us, what miracles of bounty and mercy he hath performed in our behalf; we are like that distrustful and inconsiderate people, who *remembered not the hand of God, nor the day when he delivered them: remembered not the multitude of his mercies;* but *soon forgat his works, and waited not for his counsel; They forgat God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things in the Red Sea.*[a]

From such dispositions in us, our discontents do spring; and we cannot cure them but by recollecting ourselves from such forgetfulness and negligence; by shaking off such wicked doubts and distrusts; by fixing our hearts and hopes on him who alone can help us; who is *our strength, the strength of our heart, of our life, of our salvation.*[b]

Of him (to conclude) let us humbly implore, that he in mercy would bestow upon us grace to submit in all things to his will, to acquiesce in all his dispensations, gladly to embrace and undergo whatever he alloteth to us; in every condition, and for all events befalling us, heartily to adore, thank, and bless him; even so to the ever blessed God, our gracious Maker and Preserver, be eternally rendered all glory, thanksgiving, and praise. Amen.

SERMON XLII.

OF PATIENCE.

1 Pet. ii. 21.—*Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.*

In these words two things appear especially observable; a duty implied (*the duty of patience*), and a reason expressed, which enforceth the practice of that duty (*the example of Christ.*) We shall,

[a] Psal. lxxviii. 42; cvi. 7, 13. 21.

[b] Psal. xxii. 19; xlvi. 1; lxxxi. 1; lix. 7; cxliv. 1; lxxiii. 26; xxvii. 1; cxl. 7.

using no more preface or circumstance, first briefly, in way of explication and direction, touch the duty itself, then more largely describe and urge the example.

The word *patience* hath, in common usage, a double meaning, taken from the respect it hath unto two sorts of objects, somewhat different. As it respecteth provocations to anger and revenge by injuries or discourtesies, it signifieth a disposition of mind to bear them with charitable meekness; as it relateth to adversities and crosses disposed to us by Providence, it importeth a pious undergoing and sustaining them. That both these kinds of patience may here be understood, we may, consulting and considering the context, easily discern: that which immediately precedeth, *If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God*, relateth to good endurance of adversity; that which presently followeth, *who when he was reviled reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not*, referreth to meek comporting with provocations: the text therefore, as it looketh backward, doth recommend the patience of adversities, as forward, the patience of contumelies. But seeing both these objects are reducible to one more general, comprising both, that is, things seeming evil to us, or offensive to our sense, we may so explicate the duty of patience, as to include them both.

Patience, then is that virtue which qualifieth us to bear all conditions and all events, by God's disposal incident to us, with such apprehensions and persuasions of mind, such dispositions and affections of heart, such external deportments and practices of life, as God requireth and good reason directeth. Its nature will, I conceive, be understood best by considering the chief acts which it produceth, and wherein especially the practice thereof consisteth; the which briefly are these:

1. A thorough persuasion, that nothing befalleth us by fate, or by chance, or by the mere agency of inferior causes, but that all proceedeth from the dispensation, or with the allowance of God; that *affliction doth not come forth of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground;*[a] but that all, both *good and evil, proceedeth out of the mouth of the Most High,*[b] according as David reflected when Shimei reviled him: *Let him* (said the good king) *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David;*[c] and as Job, when he was spoiled of all his goods, acknowledged, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*[d]

2. A firm belief, that all occurrences, however adverse and cross to our desires, are well consistent with the justice, wisdom, and goodness of God; so that we cannot reasonably disapprove, repine at, or complain of them; but are bound and ready to avow with the Psalmist, that *all his paths are mercy and truth; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;*[e] to judge and say with Hezekiah, *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken;*[f] to confess with David unto him, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*[g]

3. A full satisfaction of mind, that all (even the most bitter and sad accidents) do (according to God's purpose) tend and conduce to our good; acknowledging the truth of those divine aphorisms: *Happy is the man whom God correcteth; whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*[h]

4. An entire submission and resignation of our wills to the will of God, suppressing all rebellious insurrections and grievous resentments of heart against his providence; which may dispose us heartily to say after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done;* with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* with David, *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him;* yea, even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be.*[i]

5. Bearing adversities calmly, cheerfully, and courageously, so as not to be discomposed with anger or grief; not to be put out of humour, not to be dejected or disheartened; but in our disposition of mind to resemble the primitive saints,

[a] Job v. 6.
[b] Lam. iii. 38.
[c] 2 Sam. xvi. 10.
[d] Job i. 21.
[e] Psal. xxv. 10; cxlv. 17.
[f] 2 Kings xx. 19.
[g] Psal. cxix. 75.
[h] Job v. 17; James i. 12.; Prov. iii. 12; Heb. xii. 5; Rev. iii. 19.
[i] Luke xxii. 42; 1 Sam. iii. 18; 2 Sam. xv. 26.

who were ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, *as grieved, but always rejoicing;* who *took joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, who *accounted it all joy when they fell in divers tribulations.*[j]

6. A hopeful confidence in God for the removal or easement of our afflictions, and for his gracious aid to support them well; agreeable to those good rules and precepts: *It is good that a man should both hope, and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord; Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart;*[k] according to the pattern of David, who, in such a case, thus roused and stayed himself: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, amd why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance;*[l] and after the holy apostles, who in their most forlorn estate could say, *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*[m]

7. A willingness to continue, during God's pleasure, in our afflicted state, without weariness or irksome longings for alterations; according to that advice of the Wise Man, *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction;*[n] and that of the apostle, backed with our Lord's example, *Considering him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.*[o]

8. A lowly frame of mind (that is, being sober in our conceits of ourselves, sensible of our own unworthiness and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury, and wretchedness; of our manifold defects and miscarriages in practice; being meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirits; being deeply affected with reverence and dread toward the awful majesty, mighty power, perfect justice and sanctity of God; all this) wrought by our adversity, effectually, according to its design, quelling our haughty stomach, softening our hard hearts, mitigating our peevish humours: according to St. Peter's injunction, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;*[p] and God's own approbation joined with a gracious promise, *To this man will I look even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*[q]

9. Restraining our tongues from all discontentful complaints and murmurings, all profane, harsh, unsavoury expressions, importing displeasure or dissatisfaction in God's dealings toward us, arguing desperation or distrust in him; such as were those of the impatient and incredulous Israelites: *They spake against God, and said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?—Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed: can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*[r] Such as they used, of whom the prophet said, *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their king and their God;*[s] such as they were guilty of, whom St. Jude calleth γογγυστὰς, καὶ μεμψιμοίρους, *murmurers, and querulous persons* (or such as found fault with their lot), that which is styled, *charging God foolishly;*[t] for abstaining from which, notwithstanding the pressure of his most grievous calamities, Job is commended (where it is said, *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly;*[u]) that which the prophet condemneth as unreasonable in that expostulation, *Wherefore doth the living man complain?*[v] In such cases, we should smother our passions in a still and silent demeanour, as the Psalmist advised, and as he practised himself: *I was dumb* (saith he) *and opened not my mouth, because it was thy doings.*[w] Yea, contrariwise, patience requireth,

10. Blessing and praising God (that is, declaring our hearty satisfaction in God's proceedings with us, acknowledging his wisdom, justice, and goodness therein, expressing a grateful sense thereof, as wholesome and beneficial to us), in conformity to Job, who upon the loss of all his comforts, did thus vent his mind; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*[x]

j 2 Cor. vi. 10; Heb. x. 34; James i. 2.
k Lam. iii. 26; Psal. xxxvii. 7; xxvii. 14.
l Psal. xlii. 5.
m 2 Cor. iv. 8.
n Prov. iii. 11.
o Heb. xii. 3.
p 1 Pet. v. 6.
q Isa. lxvi. 2.
r Psal lxxviii. 19, 20.
s Isa. viii. 21.
t Jude 16.
u Job i. 22.
v Lam. iii. 39.
w Psal. xxxvii. 7; xlvi. 10; iv. 4; xxxix. 9.
x Job i. 21.

11. Abstaining from all irregular and unworthy courses toward the removal or redress of our crosses; choosing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relax ourselves; contentedly wearing, rather than violently *breaking our yoke*, or *bursting our bonds*;[y] rather continuing poor, than striving to enrich ourselves by fraud or rapine; rather lying under contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances attempting to gain the favour and respect of men; rather embracing the meanest condition, than labouring by any turbulent, unjust, or uncharitable practices, to amplify our estate; rather enduring any inconvenience or distress, than *setting our faces toward Egypt*,[z] or having recourse to any succour which God disalloweth; according to what is implied in that reprehension of St. Paul, *Now therefore it is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*[a] and in that advice of St. Peter, *Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*[b]

12. A fair behaviour toward the instruments and abettors of our affliction; those who brought us into it, or who detain us under it, by keeping off relief, or sparing to yield the succour which we might expect; the forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge, to retain any grudge or enmity toward them; but rather even upon that score bearing good-will, and showing kindness unto them; unto them, not only as to our bretheren, whom, according to the general law of charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, or as to the instruments of his pleasure toward us; considering that by maligning or mischiefing them, we do signify ill resentment of God's dealings with us, and in effect, through their sides, do wound his providence: thus did the pious king demean himself when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by Shimei;[c] not suffering, upon this account, any harm or requital to be offered to him: thus did the holy apostles, who *being reviled, did bless; being persecuted, did bear it; being defamed, did entreat:*[d] thus did our Lord deport himself toward his spiteful adversaries, who *being reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered, did not threaten; but committed it to him that judgeth righteously.*[e]

13. Particularly in regard to those who, by injurious and offensive usage, do provoke us, patience importeth,

(1.) That we be not hastily, over-easily, not immoderately, not pertinaciously incensed with anger toward them, according to those divine precepts and aphorisms: *Be slow to wrath; be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Give place to wrath* (that is, remove it.) *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. Cease from anger, let go displeasure, fret not thyself anywise to do evil.*[f]

(2.) That we do not in our hearts harbour any ill will, or ill wishes, or ill designs, toward them, but that we truly desire their good, and purpose to further it, as we shall have ability and occasion, according to that law (even charged on the Jews), *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;*[g] and according to that noble command of our Saviour, *Love your enemies, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*[h]

(3.) That in effect we do not execute any revenge, or for requital do any mischief to them, either in word or deed; but for their reproaches exchange blessings (or good words and wishes;) for their outrages, repay benefits and good turns; according to those evangelical rules: *Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you: Bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not: See that none render evil for evil: Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing: If thine enemy hunger, feed him;*

[y] Jer. v. 5. [z] Jer. xlii. 15.
[a] 1 Cor. vi. 7. [b] 1 Pet. iv. 19.
[c] 2 Sam. xvi. 7.
[d] 1 Cor. iv. 12. [e] 1 Pet. ii. 23; iii. 9.
[f] James i. 19; Eccles. vii. 9; Prov. xvi. 32; xiv. 17, 29; Rom. xii. 19; Eph. iv. 31, 26; Col. iii. 8; Matt. v. 21, 24; Psal. xxxvii. 8.
[g] Lev. xix. 18. [h] Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 27.

if he thrist, give him drink: Say not, I will do to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work: Say thou not, I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.[1]

14. In fine, patience doth include and produce a general meekness and kindness of affection, together with an enlarged sweetness and pleasantness in conversation and carriage toward all men; implying, that how hard soever our case, how sorry or sad our condition is, we are not therefore angry with the world, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; that we are not dissatisfied or disgusted with the prosperous estate of other men; that we are not become sullen or froward toward any man, because his fortune excelleth ours, but that rather we do *rejoice with them that rejoice*;[2] we do find complacence and delight in their good success; we borrow satisfaction and pleasure from their enjoyments.

In these and like acts, the practice of this virtue (a virtue which all men, in this state of inward weakness and outward trouble, shall have much need and frequent occasion to exercise) consisteth; unto which practice, even philosophy, natural reason, and common sense, do suggest many inducements; the tenor of our holy faith and religion do supply more and better; but nothing can more clearly direct, or more powerfully excite thereto, than that admirable example, by which our text doth enforce it: some principal of those rational inducements we shall cursorily touch, then insist upon this example.

It will generally induce us to bear patiently all things incident, if we consider, that it is the natural right and prerogative of God to dispose of all things, to assign our station here, and allot our portion to us; whence it is a most wrongful insolence in us, by complaining of our state, to contest his right or impeach his management thereof: that we are obliged to God's free bounty for numberless great benefits and favours; whence it is vile ingratitude to be displeased for the want of some lesser conveniences: that God having undertaken and promised to support and succour us, it is a heinous affront to distrust him, and consequently to be dissatisfied with our condition: that seeing God doth infinitely better understand what is good for us than we can do, he is better affected toward us, and more truly loveth us, than we do ourselves, he, with an unquestionable right, hath an uncontrollable power to dispose of us; it is most reasonable to acquiesce in his choice of our state: that since we have no claim to any good or any pleasure, and thence, in withholding any, no wrong is done to us, it is unjust and frivolous to murmur or grumble; since we are, by nature, God's servants, it is fit the appointment of our rank, our garb, our diet, all our accommodations and employments in his family, should be left entirely to his discretion and pleasure: that we being grievous sinners, *less than the least of God's mercies*, meriting no good, but deserving sore punishment from him, it is just that we should be highly content and thankful for any thing on this side death and damnation: that our afflictions being the natural fruits and results of our choice or voluntary miscarriages, it is reasonable we should blame ourselves, rather than pick quarrels with Providence for them: that our condition, be it what it will, cannot, being duly estimated, be extremely bad or insupportably grievous; for that as no condition here is perfectly and purely good (not deficient in some accommodations, not blended with some troubles), so there is none that hath not its conveniences and comforts; for that it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which create the mischiefs adherent to any state; for that also how forlorn soever our case is, we cannot fail, if we please, of a capacity to enjoy goods far more than countervailing all possible want of these goods, or presence of these evils; we may have the use of our reason, a good conscience, hope in God, assurance of God's love and favour, abundance of spiritual blessings here, and a certain title to eternal glory and bliss hereafter; which, if we can have, our condition cannot be deemed uncomfortable: that indeed our adversity is a thing very good and wholesome, very profitable and desirable, as a means of breeding, improv-

[1] Matt. v. 44, 39; Rom. xii. 14; 1 Thess. v. 15; 1 Pet. iii. 9; Prov. xxv. 21; Rom. xii. 20; Prov. xxiv. 29, Prov. xx. 22.

[2] Rom. xii. 15.

ing, and exercising the best virtues, of preparing us for and entitling us to the best rewards: that our state cannot ever be desperate; our adversity probably may not be lasting (there being no connection between the present and the future, vicissitudes being frequent, all things depending on the arbitrary dispensation of God, who doth always pity us, and is apt to relieve us:) that, however, our affliction will not outlive ourselves, and certainly must soon expire with our life: that this world is not a place of perfect convenience or pure delight; we come not hither to do our will, or enjoy our pleasure; we are not born to make laws, or pick our condition here; but that *trouble* is natural and proper to us (*we are born thereto, as the sparks fly upwards;*) *no tribulation seizeth us, but such as is human;*[k] whence it is reasonable that we contentedly bear the crosses suitable to our nature and state: that no adversity is in kind or degree peculiar to us; but if we survey the conditions of other men (of our brethren every where, of our neighbours all about us), and compare our case with theirs, we shall find that we have many consorts and associates in adversity, most as ill, many far worse bestead than ourselves; whence it must be a great fondness and perverseness to be displeased that we are not exempted from, but exposed to bear a share in the common troubles and burdens of mankind: that it hath particularly been the lot of the best men (persons most excellent in virtue and most deep in God's favour) to sustain adversity; and it therefore becometh us willingly and cheerfully to accept it: that, in fine, patience itself is the best remedy to ease us in, to rescue us from, adversity; for it cannot much annoy us, if we bear it patiently; God will, in mercy, remove it, if we please him, by demeaning ourselves well under it; but that impatience doth not at all conduce to our relief, doth indeed exasperate and augment our pain: such considerations may induce us to a patience in general respecting all sorts of evil.

There are also reasons particularly disposing to bear injuries and contumelies from men calmly and meekly, without immoderate wrath, rancorous hatred, or spiteful revenge toward them: because they do proceed from Divine Providence, disposing or permitting them (for the trial of our patience, the abasing our pride, the exercising of some other virtues, or for other good purposes) to fall upon us: because vindication of misdemeanours committed against us doth not appertain to us, we not being competent judges of them, nor rightful executors of the punishments due to them, God having reserved to himself the right of decision and power of execution; *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay it:*[l] because we are obliged to interpret charitably the actions of our neighbour, supposing his miscarriages to proceed from infirmity, from mistake, or from some cause which we should be rather inclinable to excuse than to prosecute with hatred or revenge: because, indeed, our neighbour's most culpable offences, as issuing from distemper of mind, are more reasonably the objects of compassion and charity, than of anger or ill-will: because we are bound to forgive all injuries by the command of God, and in conformity to his example, who passeth by innumerable most heinous offences committed against himself; *Gracious is the Lord, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth:*[m] so must we be also, if we will be like him or please him: because we ourselves, being subject to incur the same faults in kind, or greater in value, do need much pardon, and should thence be ready to allow it unto others, both in equity, and gratitude toward God, lest that in the gospel be applied to us; *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?*[n] Because God hath made it a necessary condition of our obtaining mercy, promising us favour if we yield it, menacing us extremity if we refuse it: *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your*

[k] Job v. 7; 1 Cor. x. 13.

[l] Rom. xii. 19; Heb. x. 30; Deut. xxxii. 35, 36; *Vide* Tert. de Pat. cap. 10.

[m] Psal. cxlv. 8; lxxxvi. 15.

[n] Matt. xviii. 32.

trespasses:[o] because our neighbour suffering by our revenge in any manner (in his body, interest, or reputation), doth not any wise profit us, or benefit our estate, but needlessly doth multiply and increase the stock of mischief in the world; yea, commonly doth bring further evil upon ourselves, provoking him to go on in offending us, rendering him more implacably bent against us, engaging us consequently deeper in strife and trouble: because no wrong, no disgrace, no prejudice we can receive from men, is of much consequence to us, if our mind be not disordered; if we are free from those bad passions, which really are the worst evils that can befal us: because, in fine, impatience itself is insignificant and ineffectual to any good purpose, or rather produceth ill effect; it doth not cure our wound, or assuage our grief; it removeth no inconvenience, nor repaireth any damage we have received, but rather inflameth our distemper and aggravateth our pain;* more really indeed molesting and hurting us, than the injury or discourtesy which causeth it. Thus briefly, doth reason dictate to us the practice of all patience.

But the example proposed by the apostle here, and otherwhere by St. Paul (*Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*[p]—) by the apostle to the Hebrews (*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,*[q]—) by our Lord himself (*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly*[r]—) that doth in a more lively manner express how in such cases we should deport ourselves, and most strongly engageth us to comply with duties of this nature. Let us now therefore describe it, and recommend it to your consideration.

The example of our Lord was indeed in this kind the most remarkable that ever was presented, the most perfect that can be imagined: he was, above all expression, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;*[s] he did undertake, as to perform the best works, so to endure the worst accidents to which human nature is subject; his whole life being no other than one continual exercise of patience and meekness, in all the parts and to the utmost degrees of them. If we trace the footsteps of his life from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we shall not be able to observe any matter of complacence scarce any of comfort (in respect to his natural or worldly state) to have befallen him.

His parentage was mean, to appearance; and his birth, in all exterior circumstances, despicable: *Is not this the carpenter's son?*[t] were words of contempt and offence, upon all occasions thrown upon him.

His life was spent not only in continual labour and restless travel, but in hard poverty; yea, in extreme penury, beneath the state not only of the meanest men, but of the most shifting beasts: *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*[u]

For his necessary sustenance we find him often destitute of ordinary provision (as when he sought food from the barren figtree), often indebted for it to the courtesy, and, as it were, alms of the vilest people, of *publicans and sinners:* so δι ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, *he was* (as the apostle saith) *a beggar for us.*[v]

Yet may we never perceive him anywise discontented with, or complaining of his condition; not discouraged or depressed in spirit thereby, not solicitously endeavouring any correction or change thereof; but willingly embracing it, heartily acquiescing therein; and, notwithstanding all its inconveniences, cheerfully discharging his duties, vigorously pursuing his main designs of procuring glory to God and benefit to men.

Nor did he only with content undergo the incommodities of a poor estate, but he was surrounded with continual dangers; the most powerful men of those times, enraged with envy, ambition, and

* Idcirco quis te lædit ut doleas, quia fructus lædentis in dolore læsi est.—*Tert. de Pat.* 8. Si patientiæ incubabo, non dolebo; si non dolebo, ulcisci non desiderabo.—*Ib.* 1.

[o] Matt. vi. 14; Ecclus. viii. 2; Matt. xviii. 35; Mark xi. 25.
[p] Phil. ii. 5.
[q] Heb. xii. 1, 2.
[r] Matt. xi. 29.

[s] *Vide* Tertul. de Pat. c. 3; Cypr. de Pat. t. ii. p. 315; Isa. liii. 3.
[t] Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.
[u] Matt. viii. 20.
[v] Matt. xxi. 18, 19.—Nullius mensam, tectumve despexit,—*Tert.* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

avarice, desperately maligning him, and being incessantly attentive, upon all occasions, to molest, hurt, and destroy him: *The world* (as he saith himself, that is, all the powerful and formidable part of the world) *hating me;*[w] yet did not this anywise dismay or distemper him, nor cause him either to repine at his condition or decline his duty. He utterly disregarded all their spiteful machinations, persisting immoveable in the prosecution of his pious and charitable undertakings, to the admiration of those who observed his demeanour: *Is not this he* (said they) *whom they seek to kill? but lo, he speaketh boldly.*[x]

He did indeed sometimes opportunely shun their fury, and prudently did elude their snares, but never went violently to repel them, or to execute any revenge for them:[y] improving the wonderful power he was endued with, altogether to the advantage of mankind, never to the bane or hurt of his malicious enemies.

Sensible enough he was of the causeless hatred they bare him (ἐμίσησάν με δωρεάν, *They*, said he, *have hated me for nothing*,[z]) and of their extreme ingratitude; yet never could he be provoked to resent or requite their dealing: see how mildly he did expostulate the case with them: *Then* (saith St. John) *the Jews took up stones to stone him: Jesus answered them, Many good things have I showed you from my Father; for which of those do ye stone me?*[a]

To be extremely hated and inhumanly persecuted, without any fault committed or just occasion offered, is greatly incensive of human passion; but for the purest and strongest good-will, for the most inexpressible beneficence, to be recompensed with most virulent reproaches, most odious slanders, most outrageous misusages—how exceeding was that meekness which, without any signification of regret or disgust, could endure it!

Out of most tender charity and ardent desire of their salvation, he instructed them, and instilled heavenly doctrine into their minds: what thanks, what reward, did he receive for that great favour?[b] to be reputed and reported an impostor: πλανᾷ τὸν ὄχλον, *he* (said they) *doth impose upon the people.*[c]

He took occasion to impart the great blessing of pardon for sin to some of them, confirming his authority of doing it by a miraculous work of goodness: how did they resent such an obligation? by accounting him a blasphemer: *Behold* (saith St. Matthew) *certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth:*[d] which most harsh and uncharitable censure of theirs he did not fiercely reprehend, but calmly discussed and refuted by a clear reasoning: τί ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρόν; *Wherefore conceive ye evil in your hearts? for whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk?** that is, Is it not credible that he who can perform the one may dispense the other?

He freed them from most grievous diseases, yea rescued them from the greatest mischief possible in nature being possessed by the unclean fiend:[e] how did they entertain this mighty benefit? by most horrible calumny, accusing him of sorcery, or conspiracy with the devil himself. *The Pharisees said, He casteth out devils by the prince of devils:*[f] yea, thence attributing to him the very name and title of the grand devil: *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more* (shall they defame) *them of his household?*[g] Yet this most injurious defamation he no otherwise rebuked than by a mild discourse, strongly confuting it: *Every kingdom* (said he) *divided against itself is brought to desolation—and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?*[h] that is, the devil better understands his interest, than to assist any man in dispossessing himself.

He did constantly labour in reclaiming them from error and sin, in converting them to God and goodness, in proposing fair overtures of grace and mercy to them, in showing them by word and practice the sure way to happiness: what issue was there of all his care and pains? what but neglect, distrust, disappointment,

* Ingratos curavit, insidiatoribus cessit.—*Tert.*

[w] John xv. 18.
[x] John vii. 25.
[y] Luke iv. 30; Matt. xxi. 27; xxii. 18.
[z] John xv. 25.
[a] John x. 31.
[b] Matt. xxiii. 37.
[c] John vii. 12; Matt. xxvii. 63.
[d] Matt. ix. 3, &c.
[e] Acts x. 38.
[f] Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24.
[g] Matt. x. 25.
[h] Matt. xii. 25.

rejection of himself, of what he said, and what he did? *Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*[i] was a prophecy abundantly verified by their carriage toward him.

These and the like usages, which he perpetually did encounter, he constantly received without any passionate disturbance of mind, any bitter reflections upon that generation, any revengeful enterprises against them; yea, requited them with continued earnestness of hearty desires, and laborious endeavours for their good.

We might observe the ingrateful disrespects of his own countrymen and kindred toward him, which he passeth over without any greivous disdain; rather excusing it, by noting that entertainment to have been no peculiar accident to himself, but usual to all of like employment: *No prophet* (said he) *is acceptable in his own country.*[j]

We might also mention his patient suffering repulses from strangers; as when, being refused admittance into a Samaritan village, and his disciples, being incensed with that rude discourtesy, would have fire called down from heaven to consume those churls,* he restrained their unadvised wrath, and thus expressed his admirable meekness: *The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*[k]

We might likewise remark his meek comporting with the stupid and perverse incredulity of his disciples, notwithstanding so many pregnant and palpable inducements continually exhibited for confirmation of their faith,[l] the which he no otherwise than sometime gently admonisheth them of, saying, τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!* ὀλιγόπιστε, τί ἐδίστασας; *O thou of small faith, why didst thou doubt?*[m]

What should I insist on these, although very remarkable instances? since that one scene of his most grievous (shall I say, or glorious) passion doth represent unto us a perfect and most lively image of the highest patience and meekness possible; of the greatest sorrow that ever was or could be, yet of a patience surmounting it; of the extremest malice that ever was conceived, yet of a charity overswaying it; of injury most intolerable, yet of a meekness willingly and sweetly bearing it: there may we observe the greatest provocations from all hands to passionate animosity of spirit and intemperate heat of speech, yet no discovery of the least disorderly, angry, or revengeful thought, the least rash, bitter, or reproachful word; but all undergone with clearest serenity of mind, and sweetness of carriage toward all persons.

To Judas, who betrayed him, how doth he address himself? Doth he use such terms as the man deserved, or as passion would have suggested, and reason would not have disallowed? Did he say, Thou most perfidious villain, thou monster of iniquity and ingratitude! thou desperately wicked wretch! dost thou, prompted by thy base covetousness, treacherously attempt to ruin thy gracious Master and best Friend; thy most benign and bountiful Saviour? No; instead of such proper language, he useth the most courteous and endearing terms: Ἑταῖρε, ἐφ' ᾧ πάρει; *Friend* (or companion) *for what dost thou come?* or what is thy business here? A tacit charitable warning there is to reflect upon his unworthy and wicked action, but nothing apparent of wrath or reproach.

From his own disciples and servants, who had beheld his many miraculous works, and were indebted to him for the greatest favours, he reasonably might have expected a most faithful adherence and most diligent attendance on him in that juncture: yet he found them careless and slothful: What then? How did he take it? was he angry, did he upbraid, did he storm at them? did he threaten to discard them? No; he only first gently admonished them: *What, could ye not watch one hour with me?* then a little exciteth them, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:* he

* Non illi saltem civitati quæ cum recipere noluerat iratus est, cum etiam discipuli iam contumelioso oppido cœlestes ignes repræsentari voluissent.—*Tert.*

[i] John xii. 38.

[j] Luke iv. 24; Matt. xiii. 57.

[k] Luke ix. 53, 56.

[l] Luke ix. 41; Matt. xvii. 17;—Non peccatores, non publicanos aspernatus est,—*Tert.*

[m] Matt. viii. 26; xiv. 31.

* Matt. xxvi 50. ° Matt. xxvi. 40, 45.

withal suggésteth an excuse for their drowsiness and dulness; *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak:* in fine, he indulgeth to their weakness, letting them alone, and saying, καθεύδετε λοιπὸν, *Sleep on now, and take your rest.*[p]

When he foresaw they would be offended at his (to appearance) disastrous estate, and fearfully would desert him, he yet expressed no indignation against them, or decrease of affection toward them upon that score; but simply mentioneth it, as unconcerned in it, and not affected thereby.

And the unworthy apostacy of that disciple, whom he had especially favoured and dignified, he only did mildly forewarn him of, requiting it foreseen by the promise of his own effectual prayers for his support and recovery; and when St. Peter had committed that heinous fact, our good Lord only *looked on him*[q] with an eye of charity and compassion, which more efficaciously struck him, than the most dreadful threat or sharp reprehension could have done: Peter thereupon *went out and wept bitterly.*

When the high priest's officer, upon no reasonable occasion, did injuriously and ignominiously strike him, he returned only this mild expostulation: *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; if well, why smitest thou me?*[r] that is, I advise thee to proceed in a fair and legal way against me, not to deal thus boisterously and wrongfully, to thy own harm.

Even careful and tender he was of those who were the instruments of his suffering; he protected them from harm who conducted him to execution; as we see in the case of the high priest's servant, whom (with more zeal than wherewith he ever regarded his own safety) he defended from the fury of his own friend, and cured of the wounds received in the way of persecuting himself.[s]

All his demeanour under that great trial was perfectly calm, not the least regret or reluctancy of mind, the least contradiction or obloquy of speech, appearing therein; such it was as became *the Lamb of God*, who was to *take away the sins of the world*, by a willing oblation of himself; such as did exactly correspond to the ancient prophecies: *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;*[t] and, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*[u]

Neither did the wrongful slanders devised and alleged against him by suborned witnesses, nor the virulent invectives of the priests, nor the barbarous clamours of the people, nor the contemptuous spitting upon him and buffeting him, nor the cruel scourgings, nor the contumelious mockeries, nor all the bloody tortures inflicted upon him, wring from him one syllable importing any dissatisfaction in his case, any wrath conceived for his misusages, any grudge or ill-will in his mind toward his persecutors; but, on the contrary, instead of hatred and revenge, he declared the greatest kindness and charity toward them, praying heartily to God his Father for the pardon of their sins. Instead of aggravating their crime and injury against him, he did in a sort extenuate and excuse it by consideration of their ignorance and mistake: *Father*, said he, in the height of his sufferings, *forgive them, for they know not what they do.*[v] The life they so violently bereaved him of, he did willingly mean to lay down for the ransom of their lives; the blood they spilt, he wished to be a salutary balsam for their wounds and maladies; he most cheerfully did offer himself by their hands a sacrifice for their offences. No small part of his afflictions was a sense of their so grievously displeasing God, and pulling mischief on their own heads, a foresight of his kind intentions, being frustrated by their obstinate incredulity and impenitence, a reflection upon that inevitable vengeance, which from the Divine justice would attend them; this foreseen, did work in him a distasteful sense (more grievous than what his own pain could produce), and drew from him tears of compassion (such as no resentment of his own case could extort;) for, *When he was come near, he beheld the city, and*

[p] Matt. xxvi. 31.
[q] Luke xxii. 61, 62,—Ἐνέβλεψε τῷ Πέτρῳ.
[r] John xviii. 23; Cypr. Ep. 65.
[s] Luke xxii. 51, &c.
[t] Isa. liii. 7.
[u] Isa. l. 6.
[v] Luke xxiii. 34.

wept over it, saying, O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace.[w]

If ever he did express any commotion of mind in reference to this matter, it was only then when one of his friends, out of a blind fondness of affection, did presume to dissuade him from undergoing these evils; then, indeed, being somewhat moved with indignation, he said to St. Peter, *Get thee behind me Satan, for thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*[x]

Neither was it out of a stupid insensibility or stubborn resolution, that he did thus behave himself; for he had a most vigorous sense of all those grievances, and a strong (natural) aversation from undergoing them; as those dolorous agonies wherewith he struggled, those deadly groans he uttered, those monstrous lumps of blood he sweat out, those earnest prayers he made to be freed from them, declare;[y] but from a perfect submission to the Divine will, and entire command over his passions, an excessive charity towards mankind, this patient and meek behaviour did spring: *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt; let not my will, but thine be done. No man taketh away my life, but I lay it down of my own accord. I will give my flesh for the life of the world.*[z] So doth our Lord himself express the true grounds of his passion and his patience.

Such is the example of our Lord: the serious consideration whereof, how can it otherwise than work patience and meekness in us? If he, that was *the Lord of glory* (infinitely excellent in dignity and virtue), did so readily embrace, did so contentedly endure such extremities of penury, hardship, disgrace, and pain, how can we refuse them, or repine at them? Can we pretend to a better lot than he received, or presume that God must deal better with us than he did with his own dearest Son? Can we be displeased at a conformity to our Lord and Master? Can we, without shame, affect to live more splendidly, or to fare more deliciously than he chose to do? Shall we fret or wail, because our desires are crossed, our projects defeated, our interests anywise prejudiced; whenas his most earnest desires and his most painful endeavours had so little of due and desired success; when he was ever ready, and had so constant occasion to say, *Let not my will be done?* Can we despise that state of meanness and sorrow which he, from the highest sublimities of glory and beatitude, was pleased to stoop unto? Can we take ourselves for the want of any present conveniences or comforts to be wretched, whenas the fountain of all happiness was destitute of all such things, and scarce did ever taste of any worldly pleasure? Are we fit or *worthy to be his disciples*, if we will not *take up his cross and follow him*;[a] if we will not go to his school, (that school wherein he is said himself to have *learnt obedience*,[b]) if we will not con that lesson which he so loudly hath read out, and transcribe that copy which he so fairly hath set before us? Can we pretend to those great benefits, those high privileges, those rich and excellent rewards, which he hath attained for us, and which he proposeth to us, if we will not go on towards them in that way of patience which he hath trod before us?[c]

Can we also, if we *consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners*,[d] be transported with any wrathful or revengeful passion, upon any provocation from our brethren? Can we hope or wish for better usage from men than our Lord did ever find?* Can we be much displeased with any man for thwarting our desires or interests, for dissenting from our conceits, for crossing our humors, whenas he, to whom all respect and observance was due, did meet with so little regard or compliance in any way; continually did encounter repulses, disappointments, oppositions, from

[w] Luke xix. 41; xiii. 34.
[x] Matt. xvi. 23.
[y] Matt. xxvi. 37, 38; Luke xxii. 44; John xii. 27; Matt. xxvi. 39; Heb. v. 7.
[z] John xviii. 11; Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke xxii. 42; John x. 18; vi. 51.

* Quam gravis causa sit hominis Christiani servum pati nolle, cum prior passus sit Dominus, &c.—*Cypr. Ep.* 56.
[a] Luke xiv. 27; ix. 23; Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24.
[b] Heb. v. 8.
[c] Heb. ii. 9, 10; Phil. ii. 9.
[d] Heb. xii. 3.

the perverse and spiteful world? Can we be very jealous of our credit, or furious when our imaginary honour (honour that we never really deserved or can justly claim, being guilty of so many great faults and sins) is touched with the least disgraceful reflection, if we do well observe and mind that most truly, and indeed only honourable personage (only honourable, because only innocent person) that ever was, had his reputation aspersed by the most odious reproaches which deepest envy and malice could devise, without any grievous resentment, or being solicitous otherwise to assert or clear it than by a constant silence? Can we be exasperated by every petty affront (real or supposed), when the most noble, most courteous, most obliging person that ever breathed upon earth, was treacherously exposed to violence by his own servant, shamefully deserted by his own most beloved friends, despitefully treated by those whom he never had offended, by those upon whom he had heaped the greatest benefits, without expressing any anger or displeasure against them, but yielding many signal testimonies of tenderest pity and love toward them? Can we see our Lord treated like a slave and a thief, without any disturbance or commotion of heart; and we, vile wretches, upon every slight occasion, swell with fierce disdain, pour forth reproachful language, execute horrible mischief upon our brethren? He indeed was surrounded with injuries and affronts; every sin, that since the foundation of things hath been committed, was an offence against him and a burden upon him (*God laid upon him the iniquities of us all;*[t]) so many declared enemies, so many rebels, so many persecutors, so many murderers he had as there have lived men in the world: for every sinner did in truth conspire to his affliction and destruction; we all in effect did betray him, did accuse him, did mock, did scourge, did pierce, and crucify him; yet he forgave all offences, he died for all persons; *while we are yet enemies, yet sinners, he died for us,*[r] to rescue us from death and misery: and shall we not then, in imitation of him, for his dear sake, in gratitude, respect, and obedience to him, be ready to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to forgive any small wrongs or offences from them; whatever they do to us, to love them, and do them what good we can? If so admirable a pattern of patience, and meekness so immense, cannot, what is there that can, oblige or move us?* I conclude with those doxologies to our so patient and meek Redeemer:[s]

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XLIII.

REJOICE EVERMORE.

1 THESS. v. 16.—*Rejoice evermore.*

Rejoice evermore! O good apostle, how acceptable rules dost thou prescribe! O blessed God, how gracious laws dost thou impose! This is a rule, to which one would think all men should be forward to conform; this is a law, which it may seem strange that any man should find in his heart to disobey: for what can any soul desire more than to be always on the merry pin, or to lead a life in continual alacrity? Who readily would not embrace a duty, the observance whereof is not only pleasant, but pleasure itself? Who is so wild as to affect a sin, which hath nothing in it but disease and disgust?

That joy should be enjoined, that sadness should be prohibited, may it not be a plausible exception against such a precept, that it is superfluous and needless, seeing all the endeavours of men do aim at nothing else but to procure joy and eschew sorrow; seeing all men do conspire in opinion with Solomon, that *a man*

[t] Isa. liii. 6.

[r] Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

* Rependamus illi patientiam, quam pro nobis ipse dependit.—*Tert. de Pat.* 16.

[s] Apoc. v. 12, 13; i. 5, 6.

hath nothing better under the sun than—to be merry.[a] Were it not rather expedient to recommend sober sadness, or to repress the inclinations of men to effuse mirth and jollity?

So it may seem; but yet, alas! if we consult experience, or observe the world, we shall find this precept very ill obeyed: for do we not commonly see people in heavy dumps? do we not often hear doleful complaints? is not this world apparently a stage of continual trouble and grief? Did not the Preacher, upon a diligent survey of *all the works done under the sun*, truly proclaim, *Behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit?*[b] Where, I pray, is any full or firm content? where is solid and durable joy to be found?

It is true that men, after a confused manner, are very eager in the quest and earnest in the pursuit of joy; they rove through all the forests of creatures, and beat every bush of nature for it, hoping to catch it either in natural endowments and improvements of soul, or in the gifts of fortune, or in the acquists of industry; in temporal possessions, in sensual enjoyments, in ludicrous divertisements and amusements of fancy; in gratification of their appetites and passions; they all hunt for it, though following a different scent, and running in various tracks: some in way of plodding for rare notions; some in compassing ambitious projects; some in amassing heaps of wealth; some in practice of overreaching subtilties; some in wreaking their malice, their revenge, their envy; some in venting frothy conceits, bitter scoffs, or profane railleries; some in jovial conversation and quaffing the full bowls; some in music and dancing; some in gallantry and courting; some in all kinds of riotous excess and wanton dissoluteness; so each in his way doth incessantly prog for joy; but all much in vain; or without any considerable success; finding at most, instead of it, some faint shadows, or transitory flashes of pleasure, the which, depending on causes very contingent and mutable, residing in a frail temper of fluid humours of body, consisting in slight touches upon the organs of sense, in frisks of the corporeal spirits, or in fumes and vapours twitching the imagination, do soon flag and expire; their short enjoyment being also tempered with regret, being easily dashed by any cross accident, soon declining into a nauseous satiety, and in the end degenerating into gall and bitter remorse; for, *Even* (as Solomon observed) *in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness:*[c] and, *Though*, as it is said in Job (ch. xx. ver. 12, 14, 20), *wickedness is sweet in the mouth—yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him:** so that indeed the usual delights which men affect are such, that we should not if we could, and we could not if we would, constantly entertain them; such *rejoicing evermore* being equally unreasonable and impossible.

Wherefore there is ground more than enough, that we should be put to seek for a true, substantial, and consistent joy; it being withal implied, that we should effect it in another way, or look for it in another box, than commonly men do; who therefore are so generally disappointed, because they would have it upon impossible or undue terms, and least expect it there, where it is only to be had.

It is a scandalous misprision, vulgarly admitted, concerning religion, that it is altogether sullen and sour, requiring a dull, lumpish, morose kind of life, barring all delight, all mirth, all good humour; whereas, on the contrary, it alone is the never-failing source of true, pure, steady joy; such as is deeply rooted in the heart, immoveably founded in the reason of things, permanent like the immortal spirit wherein it dwelleth, and like the eternal objects whereon it is fixed, which is not apt to fade or cloy; and is not subject to any impressions apt to corrupt or impair it: whereas, in our text, and in many texts parallel to it, we see, that our religion doth not only allow us, but even doth oblige us to be joyful, as much and often as can be, not permitting us to be sad for one minute, banishing the least fit of melancholy, charging us in all times, upon all occasions, to be cheerful;

[a] Eccles. viii. 15; ii. 24; iii. 12, 22; v. 18, 26. [b] Eccl. i. 14.

* Sunt quædam tristes voluptates,—*Sen. Ep.* 67.—Quaquaversum se verterit anima hominis, ad dolores figitur alibi, præterquam in te,—*Aug. Cons.* iv. 10.

[c] Prov. xiv. 13.

supposing, consequently, that it is in some manner possible to be so, and affording power to effect what it doth require.

Such, indeed, is the transcendent goodness of our God, that he maketh our delight to be our duty, and our sorrow to be our sin, adapting his holy will to our principal instinct; that he would have us to resemble himself, as in all other perfections, so in a constant state of happiness; that as he hath provided a glorious heaven of bliss for us hereafter, so he would have us enjoy a comfortable paradise of delight here. He accordingly hath ordered the whole frame of our religion in a tendency to produce joy in those who embrace it; for what is the gospel, but, as the holy angel, the first promulger of it, did report, *good tidings of great joy to all people*?[d] How doth God represent himself therein, but as *the God of love, of hope, of peace, of all consolation*, cheerfully smiling in favour on us, graciously inviting us to the most pleasant enjoyments, bountifully dispensing most comfortable blessings of mercy, of grace, of salvation to us?[e] for what doth our Lord call us to him, but *that he may give us rest and refreshment to our souls;* that he may *wipe away all tears from our eyes;* that he may save us from most woful despair, and settle us *in a blessed hope;* that we may *enter into our Master's joy;* that *our joy may be full*, and such *as no man can take from us*?[f]

What is the great overture of the gospel, but the gift of a most blessed *Comforter, to abide with us for ever*,[g] cheering our hearts with his lightsome presence and ravishing consolations? Wherein doth the kingdom of heaven consist? *not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*[h] What are the prime fruits sprouting from that root of Christian life, the Divine Spirit? They are, as St. Paul telleth us, *love, joy, and peace.*[i] Are there not numberless declarations importing a joyful satisfaction granted to the observers of God's commandments; that *light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*?[j] Doth not our Lord pronounce a special beatitude to the practiser of every virtue? And if we scan all the doctrines, all the institutions, all the precepts, all the promises of Christianity, will not each appear pregnant with matter of joy, will not each yield great reason and strong obligation to this duty of *rejoicing evermore*?

Wherefore a Christian, as such (according to the design of his religion, and in proportion to his compliance with its dictates), is the most jocund, blithe, and gay person in the world; always in humour and full of cheer; continually bearing a mind well satisfied, a light heart, and calm spirit, a smooth brow and serene countenance, a grateful accent of speech, and a sweetly composed tenor of carriage; no black thought, no irksome desire, no troublesome passion, should lodge in his breast; any furrow, any frown, any cloud, doth sit ill upon his face; the least fretful word or froward behaviour doth utterly misbecome him; if at any time it appear otherwise, it is a deflection from his character; it is a blemish and wrong to his profession; it argueth a prevarication in his judgment or in his practice; he forgetteth that he is a Christian, or hath not preserved the innocence belonging to that name. For, if a Christian remembereth what he is, or is sensible of his condition; if he reflecteth on the dignity of his person, the nobleness of his relations, the sublimity of his privileges, the greatness and certainty of his hopes, how can he be out of humour? Is it not absurd for him that is at peace with Heaven, with his own conscience, with all the world; for the possessor of the best goods, and the heir of a blessed immortality; for the friend, the favourite, the son of God, to fret or wail?

He that is settled in a most prosperous state, that is (if he pleaseth) secure of its continuance, that is well assured of its improvement; that hath whatever good he can wish in his reach, and more than he can conceive in sure reversion; what

[d] Luke ii. 10.
[e] Rom. xv. 33, 13, 5; Eph. ii. 4; 2 Cor. i. 3; xiii. 11; 1 Pet. v. 10; James v. 11.
[f] Matt. xi. 28; Apoc. vii. 17; xxi. 4; Tit. ii. 13; Matt. xxv. 21; John xv. 11; xvi. 22, 24.
[g] John xiv. 16.
[h] Rom. xiv. 17. [i] Gal. v. 22.
[j] Psal. xcvii. 11; cxviii. 15; xxxii. 11; lxviii. 3.

account can be given that he should be sad, or seem afflicted?

He that hath the inexhaustible spring of good for his portion; that hath his welfare intrusted in God's most faithful hand; that hath God's infallible word for his support; that hath free access to him, *in whose presence is fulness of joy*;[k] that hath frequent tastes of God's goodness, in gracious dispensations of providence, in intercourses of devotion, in the influences of grace; that hath the infinite beauty and excellency for the perpetual object of his contemplation and affection; that enjoyeth the serenity of a sound mind, of a pure heart, of a quiet conscience, of a sure hope, what can he want to refresh or comfort him?

If a true and perfect Christian hath no care to distract him, having discharged all his concerns on God's providence; if he hath no fear to dismay him, being guarded by the Almighty protection from all danger and mischief; if he hath no despair to sink him, having a sure refuge in the divine mercy and help; if he hath no superstitious terrors or scruples to perplex him, being conscious of his own upright intentions to please God, and confident of God's merciful willingness to accept his sincere endeavours; if he hath no incurable remorse to torment him, the stings of guilt being pulled out by the merits of his Saviour, applied by his faith and repentance; if he hath no longing desires to disquiet him, being fully satisfied with that he doth possess, or may expect from God's bounty, all other things being far beneath his ambition or coveting; if he hath no contentions to inflame him, knowing nought here worth passionately striving for, and being resolved to hold a friendly goodwill toward all men; if he hath no repining envy, seeing that none can be more happy than he may be, and that every man's good by charity is made his own; if he hath no fretful discontent, since he gladly doth acquiesce in the condition and success allotted to him, resigning his will to God's pleasure, taking all for best which thence doth occur, being assured that *all things shall work together for his good* and advantage; if he hath no spiteful rancours to corrode his heart, no boisterous passions to ruffle his mind, no inordinate appetites, perverse humours, or corrupt designs, to distemper his soul and disturb his life, whence then may sorrow come, or how can sadness creep into him?*

What is there belonging to a Christian, whence grief naturally can spring? From God, *our exceeding joy*,[l] the fountain of happiness; from heaven, the region of light and bliss; from divine truth, which illustrateth and cheereth the soul; from God's law, which *rejoiceth the heart*, and *is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb*;[m] from wisdom whose *ways are ways of pleasantness and all whose paths are peace*;[n] from virtue, which cureth our afflictive distempers, and composeth our vexatious passions; from these things, I say, about which a Christian, as such, is only conversant, no sorrow can be derived; from those sweet sources no bitter streams can flow: but hell, the flesh, the world, darkness, error, folly, sin, and irreligion (things with which a Christian should have nothing to do from which he should keep aloof, which he doth pretend utterly to renounce and abandon), these, these alone, are the parents of discomfort and anguish.

Wherefore there is the same reason, the same obligation, the same possibility, that we should rejoice evermore as that we should always be Christians, exactly performing duty, and totally forbearing sin; for innocence and indolency do ever go together, both together making paradise; perfect virtue and constant alacrity are inseparable companions, both constituting beatitude: and as although from our infirmity we cannot attain the highest pitch of virtue, yet we must aspire thereto, endeavouring *to perfect holiness in the fear of God*;[o] so, though it may not be possible to get, yet it is reasonable to seek, perpetual joy; which doing in the right way, we shall not fail of procuring a good measure of it.

Indeed, to exercise piety and to rejoice are the same things, or things so interwoven, that nothing can disjoin them; re-

[k] Psal. xvi. 11.

* Ἐπιθυμίας ἀπελαθείσης εὐδίος ἡ ψυχὴ, καὶ γαληνιῶσα γίνεται.—Just. Mart. ad Græc. Paræn. 2

[l] Psal. xliii. 4.

[m] Psal. xix. 10; cxix. 103.

[n] Prov. iii. 17.

[o] 2 Cor. vii. 1; Matt. v. 48; 1 John iii. 3.

ligious practice is like that *river the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High*,[p] that is, every pious soul. No good deed can be performed without satifaction; each virtue hath a peculiar delight annexed to it: whence the acts of joy, which upon various objects, grounds, and occasions, we may exert, being numberless, I shall only touch a few principal instances.

I. We should evermore rejoice in the exercise of our faith; according to that prayer of our apostle for the Romans, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*[q]

Every kind of faith (that which embraceth divine truths, that which applieth God's mercy, that which ensureth God's promises, that which confideth in God's providence, each of them) is a clear spring of joy, ever standing open to us; which he that drinketh *shall never thirst*.[r]

1. The faith which embraceth God's heavenly truth doth not only enlighten our minds, but is apt to affect our hearts; there being no article of faith, or mystery of our religion, which doth not involve some great advantage, some notable favour, some happy occurrence dispensed to us by the goodness of God, the which faith doth apprehend and convey to our spiritual gust, so that we cannot hardly *but receive the word with joy*.[s] For is it not very sweet with faith to contemplate the rich bounty of God in the creation of the world, and producing so goodly a frame, so copious a store of things, with a special regard to our sustenance and accommodation? Is it not satisfactory to believe that God, by his almighty hand and vigilant care, with the same benign regard, doth uphold and govern the same? Is it not extremely pleasant with faith to reflect on that great honour and happiness, which God did vouchsafe to confer on mankind, by sending down from heaven his only Son to assume our nature, and to converse with men, that we might be advanced to a *participation of the divine nature*,[t] and to an enjoyment of *communion with God*?[u] How without great delight can we be persuaded that our Saviour, by his meritorious obedience and passion, hath appeased God's wrath, and inclined his favour toward us, hath satisfied justice, hath expiated our offences, hath ransomed and rescued our souls from the dominion of sin and Satan, from death and corruption, from hell and everlasting torment, hath purchased immortal life and endless bliss for us? What comfort is there in being assured,[v] by the resurrection and triumph of our Lord over death that our souls are indeed immortal, that our bodies shall be raised from the dust, that our persons are capable of an eternal subsistence in happiness? Will it not much please us with an eye of faith to behold our Redeemer sitting in glorious exaltation at God's right hand, governing the world for the benefit of his church, dispensing benediction and grace to us; interceding, as our *merciful and faithful High Priest*,[w] for the pardon of our sins, the acceptance of our prayers, the supply of our needs, and the relief of our distresses? If we be fully convinced that our Lord Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and Saviour, *the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him*,[x] how can we otherwise than follow those, of whom St. Peter saith, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though ye now see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*?[y] So from the hearty belief of every evangelical truth we may suck consolation; each of them is food of our soul; and to believe it is to eat it: which, how can we do without a delicious or most savory relish?*

2. At least methinks that faith greatly should exhilarate us, which applieth those verities (so *worthy of all acceptation*[z]), wherein God doth open his arms wide to embrace us, proposing most kind invitations and favourable overtures of mercy, upon the fairest terms possible; together with effectual remedies for all the maladies and miseries of our souls: for if we are sensible of our heinous guilts, if we are laden with the heavy burden of our

[p] Psal. xlvi. 4. [q] Rom. xv. 13.
[r] John vi. 35; vii. 38; iv 14.
[s] Matt. xiii. 20; Phil. i. 25.
[t] 2 Pet. i. 4. [u] 1 John i. 3.

* Crede et manducasti.—*Aug.*
[v] εἰδότες——2 Cor. iv. 14.
[w] Heb. ii. 17; 1 John ii. 1.
[x] Heb. v. 9. [y] 1 Pet. i. 8.
[z] 1 Tim. i. 15.

sins, if our heart is galled with sore compunction for our misdeeds, if we are struck with the *terrors of the Lord*, and *tremble with the fear of God's judgments:*[a] how comfortable must it be to be persuaded that God is fully reconcileable to us, is very desirous to show us mercy, and gladly will accept our repentance; that *we have an advocate with the Father*, who *hath propitiated for our sins*,[b] doth meditate for our peace, hath both full power and certain will, if we sincerely do renounce our offences, wholly to remit them! so that *there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*;[c] and that *being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*[d] Will not this belief revive us, and *make the broken bones to rejoice?*[e] will not the gospel of peace be hence in truth *a joyful sound* to us? might it not hence well be proclaimed in the prophet, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned?*[f]

And if we find ourselves in habit of soul grievously distempered, labouring under great impotency and blindness, overborne and oppressed with the prevalency of corruption, pestered with unreasonable desires and passions, unable to curb our inclinations and appetites, to resist temptations, to discharge our duty in any tolerable measure, or with any ease; is it not then comfortable to believe, that we have a most faithful and skilful physician at hand to cure our distempers; that we have a powerful succour within ken to relieve our infirmities; that God is ready to impart an abundant supply of grace, of light, of spiritual strength to direct and assist us? that if any man doth lack *wisdom*, he is encouraged *with faith to ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not?*[g] If any man want strength, God's Almighty Spirit is promised to those who with humble earnestness do implore it;[h] so that we may *be able to do all things* (incumbent on us) *by Christ who strengtheneth us.*[i]

3. And what more hearty satisfaction can we feel, than in a firm persuasion concerning the real accomplishments of those *exceedingly great and precious promises*,[j] whereby we become capable of the most excellent privileges, the most ample benefits, the most happy rewards that can be? How can the belief, that by God's infallible word, or as surely as truth itself is true, an eternal inheritance of a treasure that cannot fail, of a glory that cannot fade, of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, of a felicity surpassing all expression and all conceit, is reserved for us, in recompense of our faithful obedience; how I say, can that be dead, dull, dry belief, void of sprightly comfort and pleasure?

Likewise the faith of confidence in God's good providence and paternal care over us (whatever our condition or circumstances be), should infuse a cheerful refreshment of heart into us.

It is in holy scripture most frequently asserted, that he who placeth his trust in God is a very blessed and happy person; and can we, without great satisfaction partake of that beatitude?

Can we, by such a trust, disburden all our solicitous cares, all our anxious fears, all the troubles of our spirit, and pressures of our condition upon God, with strong assurance, that from his mighty power and watchful care, in due time, in the most expedient manner, we shall receive a competent supply of our wants, a riddance from our grievances, a protection from all danger and harm, a blessing upon all our good endeavours and undertakings, without feeling much ease and peace in our hearts?

What can be more cheering than a persuasion that all our concerns are lodged in the hands of such a Friend, so wise, so able, so faithful, so affectionate, so ever readily disposed to help us and further our good? They who trust in God, are said *to abide under the shadow of the Almighty*, and *to be covered with his wings*;[k] God is often styled their

[a] Psal. xxxviii. 1; vi. 1; cii. 4; cxliii. 4; cxix. 120.
[b] 1 John ii. 1, 2.
[c] Rom. viii. 1.
[d] Rom. v. 1.
[e] Ps. ii. 8; xc. 8, 14.
[f] Isa. xl. i. 2.
[g] James i. 5, 6.
[h] Luke xi. 13.
[i] Phil. iv. 13; Rom. vii. 25; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13.
[j] 2 Pet. i. 4.
[k] Psal. xci. 1; lxi. 4; xci. 4; lvii. 1; xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7.

rock, their fortress, their shield and buckler, their defence and refuge; and are they not then impregnably safe?[l] why then should they fear any disaster? at what occurence should they be disturbed? Have they not huge reason to say with the Psalmist, *In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice; The Lord is my stength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him.*[m] May not each of those confiders in God well repress all insurrections of trouble and grief with that holy charm, *Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? O trust in God——for he is the health of my countenance, and my God.*[n]

II. We should evermore rejoice in the practice of Christian hope, making good that aphorism of Solomon, *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness:*[o] and obeying those apostolical injunctions, that we should *rejoice in hope;* that we should *retain the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end.*[p] Those excellent and most beneficial truths, those sweet proposals of grace and mercy, those rich promises, which faith doth apprehend as true in a general reference to all Christians, hope doth appropriate and apply as particularly touching ourselves; improving the knowledge of our common capacity into a sense of our special interest in them. God, saith our faith, will assuredly receive all penitent sinners to mercy, will crown all pious Christians with glory, will faithfully perform whatever he hath graciously promised to all people, hath a tender care for all that love and fear him; but God, saith our hope, will have mercy on me, will *render to me the wages of righteousness*, will *verify his good word to me his servant*,[q] will protect, will deliver, will bless me in all exigencies: if so, being conscious of our sincere endeavour to serve and please God; if discerning, from a careful reflection upon our heart and ways, that in some good measure with fidelity and diligence we have discharged the conditions required of us, we can entitle ourselves to God's special affection, we can accommodate his word to our case, we can assume a propriety in his regard, how can we forbear conceiving joy?

All hope, in proportion to the worth of its object, and the solidity of its ground, is comfortable; it being *the anchor of the soul*,[r] which stayeth and supporteth it in undisturbed rest; it appeasing unquiet desires; it setting absent goods before us, and anticipating future enjoyments by a sweet foretaste:* seeing, then, if we have a good conscience, and *our heart doth not condemn us*, our hope is grounded *on the Rock of ages*[s] (on the immutable nature and the infallible word of God;) seeing it is the hope of the most worthy, the most sublime, the most incomparable and estimable goods, it must be most extremely delightful.

If it much pleaseth men to conceit themselves next heirs of a fair estate, to have the reversion of a good office, to be probable expectants of a great preferment (although death may intercept, or other accidents may obstruct the accomplishment of such hopes), how much more shall that *lively hope*, of which St. Peter speaketh, *of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*[t] (which hope therefore can never be dashed or defeated), breed a most cheerful satisfaction, far transcending all other pleasures, which spring from the most desirable fruitions here; according to that admonition of our Lord, *Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*[u]

III. We should evermore rejoice in the performing the duty of charity; both that which we owe to God, and that which is due to our neighbour.

Love is the sweetest and most delectable of all passions; and when, by the conduct of wisdom, it is directed in a rational way toward a worthy, congruous,

[l] Psal. xviii. 2; lxii. 2.
[m] Psal. cxii. 2; lxiii. 7; xxviii. 7; (xxxiii. 21.)
[n] Psal. xlii. 11; xliii. 5.
[o] Prov. x. 28.
[p] Rom. xii. 12; Heb. iii. 6.
[q] 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Kings viii. 26.

* Καὶ πρὸ τοῦ παραστῆναι ὑπόσχεσιν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας αὐτὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τῇ ἐλπίδι γαυρουμένη εὐφραίνεται.—Const. Ap. vii. 33.

[r] Heb vi. 19.
[s] 1 John iii. 31; Isa. xxvi. 4.
[t] 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.
[u] Luke x. 20.

attainable object, it cannot otherwise than fill the heart with ravishing delight.

And such (in all respects superlatively such) an object is God: he infinitely beyond all other things deserveth our affection as most perfectly amiable and desirable, as having obliged us by innumerable and inestimable benefits, all the good that we have ever enjoyed, or that we can ever expect, being derived from his pure bounty; all things in the world, in competition with him, being pitifully mean, ugly and loathsome; all things, without him, being vain, unprofitable, and hurtful to us; so that the Psalmist might well say, *Who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I can desire beside thee.*[t] He is the most proper object of our love; for we chiefly were framed, and it is the *prime law* of our nature, to love him;[u] our soul from original instinct vergeth toward him as its centre, and can have no rest till it be fixed on him; he alone can satisfy the vast capacity of our minds, and fill our boundless desires.

He, of all lovely things, most certainly and easily may be attained; for whereas commonly men are crossed in their affection, and their love is imbittered from their affecting things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or coy things, which disdain and reject their affection; it is concerning God quite otherwise; for,

He is most ready to impart himself, and *will not reject any that cometh unto him;* he most earnestly desireth and wooeth our love; he is not only most willing to correspond in affection, but doth prevent us therein, for *we love him* (saith the apostle) *because he first loved us.*[x]

He doth cherish and encourage our love by sweetest influences and most comfortable embraces, by kindest expressions of favour, by most beneficial returns, ordering that *all things shall work together for good to those who love him:*[y] and whereas all other objects do in the enjoyment much fail our expectation, he doth ever far exceed it.

Wherefore, in all affectionate motions of our hearts toward God, in desiring him, or seeking his favour and friendship; in embracing him, or setting our esteem, our good-will, our confidence on him; in enjoying him by devotional meditations and addresses to him; in a reflexive sense of our interest and propriety in him; in that mysterious union of spirit, hereby we do closely adhere to him, and are, as it were, inserted in him;[z] in a hearty complacence in his benignity, a grateful resentment of his kindness, and a zealous desire of yielding some requital for it, we cannot but feel very pleasant transports, assuring to us the truth of that saying in the Psalm, *They that love thy name shall be joyful in thee;*[a] and disposing us to cry out with the Psalmist, *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*[b]

Indeed that celestial flame (kindled in our hearts by the spirit of love) cannot be void of warmth; we cannot fix our eyes upon infinite beauty, we cannot taste infinite sweetness, we cannot cleave to infinite felicity, without we should also perpetually rejoice in the first daughter of love to God, charity toward men; the which in complexion and cheerful disposition doth most resemble its mother: for it doth rid all those gloomy, keen, turbulent imaginations and passions, which cloud our mind, which fret our heart, which discompose the frame of our soul (from burning anger, from storming contention, from gnawing envy, from rankling spite, from racking suspicion, from distracting ambition and avarice.) It consequently doth settle our mind in an even temper, in a sedate humour, in an harmonious order, in that pleasant state of tranquillity, which naturally doth result from the voidance of irregular passions.

And who can enumerate or express the pleasures which do await on every kind, on each act, of charity?

How triumphant a joy is there in any wise doing good; whereby we feed good humour, and gratify our best inclinations; whereby we oblige our brethren, and endear ourselves to them; whereby we

[t] Psal. lxxxix. 6; lxxiii. 25.
[u] Matt. xxii. 38.
[x] John vi. 37; Psal. lxx. 4; 2 Cor. v. 20; John xiv. 21, 23; Apoc. iii. 20; 1 John iv. 19.
[y] Rom. viii. 28; 1 Cor. ii. 9.
[z] 1 Cor. vi. 17; Acts xi. 23; Deut. x. 20; John xv. 4, 6.
[a] Psal. v. 12.
[b] Psal. xxxvi. 7; lxiii. 3.

most resemble the divine goodness, and attract the divine favour!

St. Paul telleth us, that *God loveth a cheerful giver;* and he prescribeth, that *he who sheweth mercy*, should do it, ἐν ἱλαρότητι, *with merriness;* and in the Law it is commanded, *Thine heart shall not grieve, when thou givest to thy poor brother:*[c] and who indeed can out of charity give alms or shew mercy without cheerfulness? seeing that he thereby doth satisfy his own mind, and doth ease his own bowels; considering that in doing good to his neighbour he receiveth far more good to himself; that he then doth put forth his stock to very great and most certain advantage; that he dischargeth an office very acceptable to God, doth much oblige him, and render him a debtor, doth engage him abundantly to requite and reward that beneficence.

What satisfaction is there in forgiving offences! whereby we discharge our souls from vexatious inmates (black thoughts and rancorous animosities;) whereby we clear ourselves from the troubles attending feuds and strifes; whereby we imitate our most gracious Creator, and transcribe the pattern of our meek Redeemer; whereby we render ourselves capable of divine mercy, and acquire a good title to the pardon of our own sins; according to that divine word, *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you.*[d]

How unconfinedly and inexhaustibly vast is that delight, which a charitable complacence in the good of our neighbor (*a rejoicing with those that rejoice*[e]) may afford! a man thence engrossing all the good in the world, and appropriating to himself all the prosperous successes, all the pleasant entertainments, all the comfortable satisfactions of his neighbour.[f] Even a charitable sympathy, or condolency, in the adversities of our neighbour, is not destitute of content;[g] for the soul is thereby melted into a gentle temper, susceptive of the best impressions; we share in the comfort which we minister to others; we are refreshed in that kindly submission to the good pleasure of God, in that lightsome contemplation of God's mercy, in those comfortable hopes of a happy issue, which we suggest to the afflicted;[h] we thence are disposed to a grateful sense of God's goodness, in preserving ourselves from those calamities, and in qualifying us to comfort our brethren: we feel satisfaction in reflecting upon this very practice, and observing that we do act conformably to good-nature, to the dictates of reason, to the will of God, therein discharging a good conscience, and enjoying a portion of that *continual feast.*

I should, if the time would permit, further declare how we should find delight in the contemplation of all God's attributes, of his works, of his word; in thankful resentment of all God's benefits; in willing obedience to all God's laws; how joy is a proper fruit growing on the practice of humility, of justice, of temperance, of devotion, of every virtue and grace: more particularly I should have evidenced how, from a patient submission to God's afflicting hand, from penitential contrition of heart for our sins, from a pious fear and solicitude in working out our salvation, most sweet consolations (so tempering those ingredients as to render their bitterness very savoury) may spring: but in recommending joy, I would not produce grief; and therefore shall not further annoy your patience.

SERMON XLIV.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, &c.

PROV. iv. 23.—*Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c.*

BEFORE we do apply ourselves to inculcate this precept, it is requisite that we should somewhat explain the terms, and settle the meaning thereof; in doing that, we begin with the last words, which qualify the action enjoined as to its degree or extent; *with all diligence:* the words (מִכָּל־מִשְׁמָר) answering to these in the Hebrew, do, according to the various use or force of the particle מִן admit a threefold acception. They may (1.) denote absolutely the intenseness in degree, or extension in kind, of the performance re-

[c] 2 Cor. ix. 7; Rom. xii. 8; Deut. xv. 10; Ecclus. xxxv. 10.
[d] Matt. xi. 25; xxv. 35. [e] Rom. xii. 15.
[f] 1 Cor. xiii. 6. [g] Rom. xii. 15.
[h] 2 Cor. i. 6; vii. 7,—Συμπαρακληθῆναι,—Rom. i. 12.

quired in this precept: πάσῃ φυλακῇ τήρει σὴν καρδίαν, *Omni custodia serva cor tuum;* keep thy heart with all custody; that is, with all sorts or with all degrees of care and diligence; so the LXX. interpreters, and the vulgar Latin following them, render those words. They may (2.) taking the particle for a *Mem excellentiæ*, as they call it, signifying comparatively, *præ omni custodia serva cor tuum;* keep thy heart above all keeping; that is, especially and more than thou keepest any other thing: so doth Pagnin understand them, not without cause, both for the reason subjoined here, *because from it are the issues of life;* that is, because it is the principal part and fountain of all vital operations, and therefore deserveth the best custody; as also for that in what follows, and in other places of Scripture frequently, we are enjoined to keep our tongues from bad discourse, our eyes from wandering after bad objects, our feet from declining to bad courses; and therefore, probably in comparison to these, although needful and inferior custodies, we are admonished to this most especially incumbent custody of our hearts. They may also (3.) and that probably enough, be taken so as to denote the universality of the object or matter of this keeping, or the adequate term and bound thereof; keep thy heart, ἀπὸ παντὸς φυλάγματος, *ab omni re custodienda*, from every thing which it should be kept from; that is, from every thing offensive or hurtful to it: so did Aquila and Theodotion translate the words. These senses are all of them good, and each may fairly pretend to find place in the meaning of the words; which of them with most likelihood, I shall not discuss, meaning only to insist upon the substance of the precept; the nature of which being duly considered, will infer that it is to be observed according to the manner and measure prescribed, understood according to any of those senses, or according to all of them conjointly.

As for the meaning of the words, *Keep thy heart*, two inquiries may be made: 1. What the heart is, which Solomon adviseth us to keep; 2. What to keep it, doth import.

To the first I answer, that in the style of Scripture the heart doth commonly import the whole inward man, the ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, *the man within us*,[a] as St. Paul speaketh, the ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος, *the hidden man of the heart*,[b] as St. Peter calleth it, comprehending all the thoughts and imaginations, all the inclinations and dispositions, all the judgments and opinions, all the passions and affections, all the resolutions and purposes formed within us; in short, all interior, whether tendencies to move, or actual motions of the human soul. For the scripture (by the way we may observe it) seemeth to favour that anciently most common and current opinion (embraced by Aristotle himself, even as true in strict philosophy, although rejected by most of the latter schools), that the heart, that material part and principal entrail of our body, is the chief seat of the soul, and immediate instrument of its noblest operations. However, because the heart in a man's breast is most inwardly seated, most secluded from sight, guarded from access, fenced from danger, thence whatever is inmost, most invisible, most inaccessible in any thing, is called the heart thereof; and all a man's secret thoughts, inclinations, opinions, affections, designs, are involved in this name: sometimes all, or divers of them conjunctly, are called his heart; sometimes any one of them singly (as there is subject or occasion of using the word) is so termed: instances in every kind are innumerably many, and very obvious; and therefore I shall not spend time in producing any; but shall suppose that here the word may be understood in its utmost extent, so as to comprehend all the particulars intimated, there being no apparent reason for preferring or excluding any; all of them being capable of moral quality, both simply and immediately in themselves, and consequentially as they may be the principles of good or bad actions; and because all of them may be, need to be, ought to be, the objects of the keeping here enjoined.

But then, what is this *keeping*? I answer that the word, as applied to this matter, is especially capable of three senses, each of which may be exemplified.

1. It may imply to observe, that is, to

[a] Rom. vii. 22. [b] 1 Pet. iii. 4.

keep it under a constant view, as it were; to mark or attend unto, to inquire into and study our heart. So, *My son*, saith the Wise man, *give me thy heart, and let thine eyes keep* (or observe) *my ways*:[c] the same word which is here, is there used, both in the Hebrew and Greek, and can there well signify no other custody but that of attending unto; it being the office of the eye only to look and observe. Likewise, *Observe* (saith God in the law) *and hear all these words which I command thee*;[d] that is, hear them very attentively: and so in divers other places.

2. It may also denote the governance or good management of our hearts, keeping all the motions thereof in due order, within fit compass, applying them to good, and restraining them from bad things: so the Psalmist useth the word, when he saith, *I will keep my mouth with a bridle*;[e] that is, I will so rule and curb it, that no evil language shall issue from it: so when the Wise Man adviseth *to keep our foot when we go to the house of God*;[f] by keeping it, he means rightly to guide and order our proceedings, or well to dispose ourselves when we address ourselves to religious performances: so, again, *He* (saith he) *that keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof*;[g] he that keepeth it, that is, he that dresseth and ordereth it to advantage for bearing fruit.

3. Again, keeping may be taken for preserving, guarding, securing from mischief or damage; which indeed is the most common use of the word, and therefore we need no instancing to countenance it.

Now any of these senes may be intended here, or all of them together; and they indeed are in the nature of the thing so coherent, or so mutually dependent one on the other, that any one of them can hardly be practised without the rest: for without heedfully observing our heart, we cannot well govern it; and an ill governed heart cannot easily be attended to; and without both watchful observation and skilful management of it, we cannot guard it from evil; and reciprocally without guarding it, we cannot well rule it, or duly mind it: such a complication there is in practice of these three custodies.

I shall at present only discourse concerning the first of them, which seems in the nature of things, and according to our method of acting, to precede. According to this exposition, when it is said, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, we may understand it as if each of us were thus advised: With a most constant and wary care observe all the interior propensions and motions of thy soul; whatever is done or designed within thee, whither thy desires lean, what thy affections are stirred by, to what thy judgment of things doth lead thee, with greatest attention and assiduity mark and ponder it.

It is a peculiar excellency of human nature, which seemeth more to distinguish a man from any inferior rank of creatures than bare reason itself, that he can reflect upon all that is done within him, can discern the tendencies of his soul, is acquainted with his own purposes. Some shadows of other rational operations are discoverable in beasts; and it is not easy to convince them who, from plausible experiments, do affirm them sometimes to syllogize: but no good reason or experience can, I suppose, make it probable that they partake of this reflexive faculty; that they do ever regard or remark upon their own imaginations; they seem always to march directly forward with a blind impetuousness toward some pleasing object, without attending to the fancy that guides them, or the appetite which excites them: neither indeed do they seem to need any such power in order to the preservation of their life, or gratifying of their sense, which are the main ends they were designed and fitted for. But man being designed by his Maker, disposed by the frame of his nature, and obliged by a law imposed on him, not to follow casual impulses from exterior objects, nor the bare conduct of his imagination, nor the sway of his natural propensities; but to regulate as well the internal workings of his soul, as his external actions, according to certain laws or rules prescribed him, to settle his thoughts upon due objects, to bend his inclinations into a right frame, to constrain his affections within due bounds, to rectify his judgments of things, to ground his purposes upon honest reasons, and di-

[c] Prov. xxiii. 26.
[d] Deut. xii. 28.
[e] Psal. xxxix. 1.
[f] Eccles. v. 1.
[g] Prov. xxvii. 18.

rect them unto lawful matters: it is needful that he should have this power of discerning whatever moveth or passeth within him; what he thinks upon, whether he inclines, how he judgeth, whence he is affected, wherefore he doth resolve: without this power he could not be a moral agent, not able to perform any duty, not properly subject to any law, not liable to render an account of his doings: did he not perceive his own thoughts, how could he dispel them, when they are bad or vain? might he not observe his own inclinations, how could he strive to restrain them or to reform them, when they draw to unlawful practices? were he not sensible of his affections, how could he endeavour to reduce or compose them, when they become exorbitant or tumultuous? were he not conscious of his own opinions, how could he weigh and examine them? how could he conform his actions to them, or practise according to the dictates of his conscience? It is therefore plainly needful that man should be endued with this power, for that without it he can neither perform the duty required of him, nor enjoy the benefits he is capacified and designed for: our Maker therefore hath conferred it upon us, our duty consists in its right use, our advantage ariseth from the constant and careful exercise of this excellent faculty: constant and careful, I say: *constant*, for observation implies so much; for, if ever we shut our eyes, or turn our heads aside, what we look to may be gone; much therefore will pass away undiscerned and unobserved by us, especially such quick and fleeting things as are the interior motions of our soul, will escape; wherefore a continual vigilancy is requisite to a keeper of the heart: it must also be *careful*; as the keeper of a thing so nimble and slippery must not sleep, so he must not slumber; he must not be oscitant, but very intent upon his charge; superficial glances upon the outward face, as it were, of the soul, will not suffice: to *observe*, is with earnest care to look through the matter, to discern whatever lurketh therein, to pierce into the very depth and bottom of it, to spy through every nook and corner therein; otherwise, it is but slightly viewed rather than truly observed: especially so subtle, so intricate, so obscure a thing as a man's heart is, requireth an extraordinary application of mind in observing it with judgment and fruit.

This is, then, our duty recommended by the Wise Man: To be continually, with extreme diligence, looking inward upon ourselves, observing what thoughts spring up within us; what imaginations find most welcome harbour in our breasts; what objects most affect us with delight or displeasure (what is it that we love and readily embrace; what we distaste and presently reject;) what prejudices do possess our minds; wherefore we propose to ourselves such undertakings, conversing with ourselves, and, as it were, discoursing in this manner: What is it that I think upon? are my thoughts serious, seasonable, and pure? Whither do I propend? are my inclinations compliant to God's law and good reason? What judgments do I make of things? are my apprehensions clear, solid, sure, built upon no corrupt prejudice? What doth most easily stir me, and how is my heart moved? are my affections calm, and orderly, and well placed? What plots do I contrive, what projects am I driving on? are my designs good, are my intentions upright and sincere? Let me thoroughly inquire into these points, let me be fully satisfied in them: thus should we continually be doing. The holy scripture doth often bid us to judge ourselves; to examine our works; to search and try; to weigh, to heed, to watch over our ways: *If* (saith St. Paul) *we would judge* (discern, or distinguish) *ourselves, we should not be judged*;[h] that is, we should avoid those miscarriages which bring the divine judgments upon us: and, *Let us* (saith the Prophet Jeremy) *search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord*; and, *I said, I will take heed to my ways* (saith the Psalmist;) and, *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established*, is the Wise Man's advice.[i] Search our ways, and ponder our paths; this implies that we first do examine and weigh our hearts, for there our ways begin, thence is motion derived to our feet and to our hands also; all our actions depend as effects of them, all do receive their moral quality thence:

[h] 1 Cor. xi. 31,—Εἰ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν.—Gal. vi. 4.

[i] Lam. iii. 40; Psal. xxxix. 1; Prov. iv. 26.

whatever in our doings is good or bad, ἔσωθεν ἐκπορεύεται,[j] doth, as our Lord expresses it, issue from within us; our actions are but streams, sweet or bitter, clear or foul, according to the tincture they receive at those inward sources of good or evil inclinations, of true or false judgments, of pure or corrupt intention: there consequently we are principally obliged to exercise the scrutiny and trial required of us.

Socrates is reported to have much admired that verse in Homer,[k]

Ὅττι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακόντ' ἀγαθόντε τετυκται.

affirming that in it the sum of all wisdom is comprised; the sense and drift thereof being this, as he took it: Seek and study what good or bad is at home, within thy house; see how all goes in thy breast; employ thy chief inquiry upon the affairs of thy soul; there confining thy curiosity and care.

Such is the duty; and the practice thereof is of huge profit and use, bringing many great benefits and advantages with it; the neglect of it is attended with many grievous inconveniences and mischiefs: and for persuading to the one, dissuading from the other, I shall propound some of them, such as are most obvious, and offer themselves to my meditation.

The most general and most immediate advantage arising hence is this, that, by such a constant and careful inspection, or study upon our hearts, we may arrive to a competent knowledge of, and a true acquaintance with ourselves (a most useful knowledge, a most beneficial acquaintance), neither of them being otherwise attainable. *The heart* (as you know the prophet says) *is deceitful above all things:* and *who*, adds he, *can know it?*[l] Who can know it? None, it seems, but God that made it, and the man that hath it: he that hath it must, I say, be able competently to know it: even in regard to him the question may intimate some difficulty, but it doth not denote an absolute impossibility. Hard it may be for us to know the heart, by reason of its deceitfulness; but the slyest imposture, if narrowly looked into, may be detected: it is a very subtle and abstruse, a very various and mutable thing; the multiplicity of objects it doth converse with, the divers alterations it is subject to from bodily temper, custom, company, example, other unaccountable causes; especially its proneness to comply with, and to suit its judgments of things unto present circumstances without, and present appetites within, do render it such; wherefore it is not indeed easy to know it: but yet possible it is; for under severe penalties we are obliged not to be deceived by it, or, which is all one, not to suffer it to be deceived: *Let no man* (saith St. Paul) *deceive himself: See that ye be not deceived*, saith our Saviour: *Take heed* (saith Moses) *to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived.*[m] Such precepts there are many, obliging us to know our hearts, and to discover the fallacies put on them, or upon us by them; carrying with them directions how to compass it; that is, by looking about us, and taking heed, by careful circumspection and caution. It is therefore a feasible thing to avoid being imposed upon, and well to understand ourselves: but as other abstruse pieces of knowledge, so this especially cannot be attained without industrious applications of our mind, and constant observations, to find the corners wherein the deceit lurks; we must pursue its secret windings and intrigues; we must trace it step by step, as hunters do wild beasts, into the utmost recesses of its first desires and most deeply radicated prejudices; we must do as David did, when he strove to free himself from distrust and impatience in his straits: *I communed with my own heart* (saith he), *and my spirit made diligent search:*[n] by which practice he found, as he farther acquaints us, that it was *his infirmity*, which moved him to doubt of God's mercy and benignity toward him. Cicero, having somewhere commended philosophy as the most excellent gift by Heaven bestowed upon man, assigns this reason: *because it teaches us, as all other things, so especially this of all most difficult thing, to know ourselves.** But he, with his favour, doth

[j] Mark vii. 23.
[l] Jer. xvii. 9.
[k] Gell. xiv. 6.

* Hæc enim una nos cum cæteras res omnes, tum quod est difficillimum docuit, ut nosmetipsos nosceremus.—*Cic. de Leg.* 1.

[m] 1 Cor. iii. 18; Luke xxi. 8; Deut. xi. 16.
[n] Psal. lxxvii. 6, 10.

seem to promise for his friend more than she is able to perform; the main part of this knowledge doth lie beyond the reach of any particular method; the empiric seems to have more to do here than the doctor. Philosophy may perhaps afford us some plausible notions concerning the nature of our soul, its state, its power, its manners of acting; it may prescribe some wide directions about proceeding in the discovery of ourselves; but the particular knowledge (and therein the chief difficulty lieth) of ourselves, how our souls stand inclined and disposed, that only our particular earnest study and assiduous observation can yield unto us; and it is an inestimable advantage to obtain it. All men are very curious and inquisitive after knowledge; the being endued therewith passeth for a goodly ornament, a rich possession, a matter of great satisfaction, and much use: men are commonly ashamed of nothing so much as ignorance; but if any knowledge meriteth esteem for its worth and usefulness, this, next to that concerning Almighty God, may surely best pretend thereto; if any ignorance deserveth blame, this certainly is most liable thereto: to be studious in contemplating natural effects, and the causes whence they proceed; to be versed in the writings and stories of other men's doings; to be pragmatical observers of what is said or done without us (that which perchance may little concern, little profit us to know), and in the meanwhile to be strangers at home, to overlook what passeth in our own breasts, to be ignorant of our most near and proper concernments, is a folly, if any, to be derided, or rather greatly to be pitied, as a source of many great inconveniences to us. For it is from ignorance of ourselves that we mistake ourselves for other persons than we really are; and accordingly we behave ourselves toward ourselves with great indecency and injustice; we assume and attribute to ourselves that which doth not anywise belong unto us, or become us: as put case we are ignorant of the persons we converse with, as to their quality, their merit, their humour; we shall be apt to miscall and mistake them; to misbehave ourselves in our demeanour toward them; to yield them more or less respect than befits them; to cross them rudely, or unhandsomely to humour them: in like manner, if we be strangers to our hearts, shall we carry ourselves toward our own selves; we shall hence, like men in a phrensy, take ourselves for extraordinary people, rich, and noble, and mighty, when indeed, our condition being duly estimated, we are wretchedly mean and beggarly. We do frequently hug ourselves (or rather shadows in our room), admiring ourselves for qualities not really being in us;[o] applauding ourselves for actions nothing worth, such as proceed from ill principles, and aim at bad ends; whenas, did we turn our thoughts inwards; and regard what we find in our hearts, by what inclinations we are moved, upon what grounds we proceed, we should be ashamed, and see cause rather to bemoan than to bless ourselves: descending into ourselves, we might perchance discern that most of our gallant performances (such as, not considering our hearts, we presume them to be) are derived from self-love or pride;* from desire of honour, or love of gain; from fear of damage or discredit in the world, rather than out of love, reverence, and gratitude toward God, of charity, compassion, and good-will toward our brethren, of sober regard to our own true welfare and happiness; which are the only commendable principles and grounds of action. St. Luke telleth us of certain men, who *persuaded themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*;[p] upon occasion of whom our Saviour dictated the parable of the Pharisee and Publican.—Whence, think we, came that fond confidence in themselves, and proud contempt of others? From ignorance surely of themselves, or from not observing those bad dispositions, those wrong opinions, those corrupt fountains within, from whence their supposed righteous deeds did flow.† *If any man* (saith St. Paul, giving an account of such presumptions) *thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, ἑαυτὸν φρενατατᾷ, he cheats himself in his mind; but let every man examine his*

* Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere, nemo.

† Ῥᾷστον ἑαυτὸν ἀπατᾶν, καὶ οἴεσθαι εἶναί τι οὐδὲν ὄντα, ὑπὸ τῆς κενῆς δόξης φυσιούμενον,—Nazianz. Orat. 27.

[o] Rev. iii. 17. [p] Luke xviii. 7.

*work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone :** (or privately with himself;) some, he implieth, do impose upon and delude themselves, imagining themselves somebodies (endued forsooth with admirable qualities, or to have achieved very worthy deeds;) whenas, if they would inquire into themselves, they should find no such matter; that themselves were no such men, and their works no such wonders: but if (saith he) a man doth, *δοκιμάζειν ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἔργον*, explore and examine what he doeth, and in result thereof doth clearly perceive, that he acteth upon good reasons, and with honest intentions, then may he indeed enjoy a solid interior satisfaction (a true *καύχημα*, or exultation of mind), whatever others, not acquainted with those inward springs of his motion, do please to judge of him and his proceedings. No man indeed can truly value himself, or well approve of his own doings, so as to find any perfect comfort in himself, or in them, who doth not by studying himself, discover whence and why he acts: one may be a flatterer, but cannot be a true friend to himself, who doth not thoroughly acquaint himself with his own inward state, who doth not frequently consult and converse with himself: a friend to himself, I said; and to be so, is one of the greatest benefits that human life can enjoy; that which will most sweeten and solace our life to us: friendship with others (with persons honest and intelligent) is a great accommodation, helping much to allay the troubles, and ease the burdens of life; but friendship with ourselves is much more necessary to our well-being; for we have continual opportunities and obligations to converse with ourselves; we do ever need assistance, advice, and comfort at home :† and as commonly it is long acquaintance and familiar intercourse together, which doth conciliate one man to another, begetting mutual dearness and confidence, so it is toward one's self: as no man can be a friend to a mere stranger, or to one whose temper, whose humour, whose designs, he is ignorant of; so cannot he be a friend to himself, if he be unacquainted with his own disposition and meaning;* he cannot in such a case rely upon his own advice or aid when need is, but will suspect and distrust himself; he cannot be pleasant company to himself, but shall be ready to cross and fall out with himself; he cannot administer consolation to his own griefs and distresses; his privacy will become a desertion, his retirement a mere solitude. But passing over this general advantage, I shall with some more minuteness of distinction consider divers particular advantages accruing from the practice of this duty, together with the opposite inconveniences, which are consequent upon the neglect thereof, in the following discourse.

* Πρὸς ἑαυτὸν μόνον.

† —— patriæ quis exul se quoque fugit?
Αὐτὸς σεαυτῷ χρῶ συμβούλῳ, καὶ τῷ θεῷ.—Naz. Ep. 60.

* Ἔνιοι τὸν ἴδιον βίον ὡς ἀτερπέστατον θέμα προσιδεῖν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, οὐδ' ἀνακλάσαι τὸν λογισμὸν ὡς φῶς ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς καὶ περιαγαγεῖν· ἀλλ' ἡ ψυχὴ γέμουσα κακῶν παντοδαπῶν, καὶ φρίττουσα, καὶ φυσωμένη τὰ ἔνδον, ἐκπηδᾷ θύραζε, &c.—Plut. de Curios. p. 916.

SERMON XLV.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, &c.

PROV. iv. 23.—*Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c.*

I PROCEED to the particular advantages of the practice of this duty, and the inconveniences of the neglect of it.

1. The constant and careful observation of our hearts will serve to prevent immoderate self-love and self-conceit; to render us sober and modest in our opinions concerning, and in our affections toward ourselves; qualifying us to comply with the apostolical precept, *μὴ φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν*,[a] that is, not to overween, or overvalue ourselves, and our own things: for he that, by serious inspection upon his own heart, shall discern how many fond, impure, and ugly thoughts do swarm within him; how averse his inclinations are from good, and how prone to evil; how much his affections are misplaced and distempered (while he vehemently delights in the possession, and impotently frets for the want of trifles, having small content in the fruition,

[a] Gal. vi. 3.

[a] Rom. xii. 3.

and but slender displeasure for the absence of the greatest goods; while empty hopes exalt him, and idle fears deject him; while other various passions, like so many tempests, drive and toss him all about;) who shall observe, how clouds of darkness, error, and doubt, do hover upon the face of his soul; so that he quickly taketh up opinions, and soon layeth them down, and often turneth from one mistake unto another; how unsettled his resolutions are, especially in the pursuance of the best goods, and what corrupt mixtures cleave to his best purposes; who taketh notice how backward he is unto, and how cold in, devotions toward God; how little sensible of his goodness, or fearful of his displeasure, or zealous for his honour, or careful of performing his duty toward him; how little also it is that he desireth or delighteth in the good, that he pitieth and grieveth at the evil of his neighbour; how sluggish also and remiss he is in the pursuance of his own best affairs and highest concernments; he that doth, I say, frequently with heedfulness regard these imperfections and obliquities in his own heart, how can he be ravished with self-love? how can he be much taken with himself? Can any man dote upon such deformity, admire such weakness and naughtiness? No, surely: that men are so amorous of themselves, so haughty and arrogant in their conceits, doth constantly arise from not reflecting on their own hearts; not beholding themselves wistly enough in that mirror; not considering, according to just representation there, how little lovely or worthy they are: if they did practice that, they would see reason, and thence become inclinable, rather to despise, to loathe, to pity themselves.

2. Upon that advantage is consequent, that this practice will dispose us with equanimity and patience to bear all crosses and grievances befalling us:* so producing not only an excellent virtue, but a considerable solace to us; for the being conscious of so much unworthiness, which observation of our heart will necessarily discover, will not only justify the providence (so removing all just cause of complaint), but will commend the benignity of God unto us (so administering good matter of thanks.) It will prompt us heartily to confess with those in Ezra, that *our punishments are less than our deservings;* to join in acknowledgment with the Psalmist, that *God hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;* to say with Jeremy, *It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not;* with Jacob, *I am less than any of thy mercies.*[b]

3. Particularly this practice will fence us against immoderate displeasure occasionable by men's hard opinions, or harsh censures passed on us: for he, that by inquiry into himself perceives so many defects in himself, will not so easily nor so greatly be offended, if some of them (or some like to them) be objected to him; since he finds himself truly liable to many more, and greater. Epictetus's advice is, when you are told that any man speaks ill of you, that you should not apologize, but answer only, that he was ignorant of many other faults of yours, or he would not only have mentioned those. To be disposed, without dissembling or affectation, to follow his counsel, would argue a man very intelligent of himself, and well prepared to endure happily and handsomely encounters of this kind, which every man shall be sure to meet with. None, indeed, can so contentedly brook reproach, or blame, as he that by intimate acquaintance with his own heart doth know the censure passed on him to be in effect mild and favourable; as finding himself a witness of more faults, than any adversary can accuse him of; as being a stricter examiner and severer judge of himself, than the most envious eye or disaffected mind can be. It is also some comfort, that, if censures be very outrageous, a man by knowledge of himself (by knowing his own dispositions, if his person be disfigured by a very ill character; by knowing his own purposes, if his actions be grievously aspersed) is certain they are such; that he can be as well a faithful witness and just judge for himself, as against himself.

4. Likewise this practice will defend

* Leniter ex merito quicquid patiare ferendum est.—*Ovid. Ep.* 5.

[b] Ezra ix. 13; Psal. ciii. 10; Lam. iii. 22; Gen. xxxii. 10.

us, as from the discomforts of harsh censure, so from the mistakes and miscarriages to which the more favourable opinions of men, or their flattering expressions (those luscious poisons), may expose us.*

—— Nihil est quod credere de se
Non possit, cum laudatur. ——

It is not only true of great men, but even of all men: the common nature of men disposeth them to be credulous when they are commended, or receive any signification of esteem from others: every ear is tickled with this ἡδιστον ἄκουσμα, this sweet music of applause: but we are not to rely upon others' imperfect and ill-grounded judgment, so much as upon our own more certain knowledge concerning ourselves:

—— ne cui de te plus quam tibi credas.

Take no man's word before thine own sense, in what concerns thine own case and character, is an advice deserving our regard and practice: for that a man in questions of this kind is able to be a skilful and indifferent umpire between himself and others; that he is neither elevated nor depressed in mind by external weights, but keepeth himself equally poised in a just consistence by his own well informed conscience; that neither his heart is exasperated with the bitterest gall of reproach, nor his head intoxicated with the sweetest wine of flattery, is an invaluable convenience of life; or rather it is a virtue arguing a most strong and healthful constitution of soul. *How great a levity of mind, how great a vanity is it*, saith a good father, *setting aside a man's own conscience, to follow other men's opinion (and even that feigned and forged), to be snatched away by the wind of false praise, to rejoice in being circumvented, and to receive being mocked for a benefit* † From being thus abused, this practice alone can secure us: if we know ourselves well, we cannot so easily be deluded by the mistakes of others concerning us, on either hand.

5. Likewise, further upon the same, this practice will conduce to qualify our opinions, and moderate our passions toward others; so that without intemperate anger, or bitterness, we may bear the faults, errors, and infirmities of our brethren; that we shall be benign in our carriage, and gentle in our censures even toward them who do not behave themselves so well and wisely as they should do. St. Paul thus admonisheth the Galatians: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual* (the more spiritual, whether in truth, or in our own esteem, the more especially are we obliged hereto) *restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou may be also tempted:*[c] σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, looking upon, or spying into thyself; such considering ourselves, taking notice of our own infirmity within, perceiving how subject we are to the impressions of temptation, and that hence it may be our own case to fall and falter, if occasion concur with our weakness; discerning this, I say, as it will be a reason obliging, so it may be an instrument conducing to a mitigation of spirit toward those whom we see overtaken with mistake, or overborne by frailty.[d] *Why dost thou see a mote in thy brother's eye, but dost not consider the beam in thine own eye?*[e] is our Saviour's question. Why a man should do so, there cannot, as he implies, any good reason be assigned; it is a very unreasonable and inexcusable miscarriage: but whence a man doeth so is obvious and plain; it is because he curiously pries into other men's doings, and carelessly neglecteth the observation of his own heart. Did we reflect our sight inwards, we should be more apt to mark our own faults, and less ready to discover those of others; or, however, we should be more gently affected in regard to them: for he that knows himself a beggarly wretch, will he reproach poverty to another? he that consulting the glass doth find himself ill-favoured, will he upbraid another for want of grace or beauty? he that perceives that the dart will rebound,

* Index ipse sui se totum explorat ad unguem,
Quid proceres, vinique ferat quid opinio vulgi,
Securus ——

† Quæ hæc tanta levitas est animi, quæ tanta vanitas relicta propria conscientia alienam opinionem sequi, et quidem fictam atque simulatam; rapi vento falsæ laudationis, gaudere ad circumventionem suam, et illusionem pro beneficio accipere?—*Hier.* (vel *Paulinus*) *ad Celant.*

[c] Gal. vi. 1.
[d] Marc. Ant. xi. 18.
[e] Matt. vii. 2.

and thereby wound himself, will he not be careful of flinging it? will a man be forward in pronouncing a heavy sentence against another, who considers himself by plain consequence involved in the condemnation thereof? Should a man do so, he doth at least render himself uncapable of apology or excuse: so we are told by St. Paul: *Every censurer* (πᾶς ὁ κρίνων) *is* (saith he) *inexcusable; for that in arraigning another he condemns himself;*[f] guilty is he of inexcusable folly, or impudence; of folly and blindness, if he see not; of extreme impudence, if, seeing his own obnoxiousness, he will not abstain from judging others for that, of which himself is guilty in the same kind, or equivalently in some other. You know how David was caught by Nathan, and unwarily adjudged himself to death:[g] and so may every man expose himself, that is rigorous in censure toward others, without reflecting upon himself, and considering his own heart; wherein he shall find so much ground and matter of being angry with, and judging himself.* If we will be fierce and keen, it is reason we should be so first, and chiefly there where our greatest enemies do abide, whence most mischief ariseth to us; where there is fittest matter, and justest cause of passion: thus is this practice a most proper and effectual remedy for those baneful vices of pride and peevishness in ourselves, of malignity and fury toward others. But further,

6. The observation of our heart yieldeth great advantage, in being very conducible to render men truly wise and prudent, in those things especially which most nearly concern them; giving them to see before them, and to understand what they do; and to proceed without security; as contrarily the neglect thereof rendereth men unadvised and uncertain in their doings. A main point of prudence consisteth in suiting a man's undertakings to his powers and capacities; in not attempting things surpassing his ability or fitness; and in not declining such useful or beneficial attempts as he may well compass. Some are overbold and rash in setting upon things beyond their strength to accomplish, or skill to manage; whence commonly with shame and sorrow they are defeated in their enterprises; others are over-backward and diffident, so as not to adventure upon what they may with good advantage, or perhaps ought to perform; thence depriving themselves of the benefits they might obtain, or omitting the duties which they are obliged to; both which inconveniences usually do proceed from the not looking into and studying the heart; for the most and greatest impediments of action do lie there; being grounded upon inward indispositions, or disagreeableness of men's temper, capacity, inclination, to the matters to which they apply themselves. A tender foot will be galled and lamed, if you set it going in rugged paths; a weak head will turn, if you place it high, or upon the brink of a precipice; a soft spirit cannot well comport with boisterous employment; he that naturally affects calm and quiet, must not hope to come off well, if he engage himself upon affairs exposed to abundance of care and tumult; nor will he, if he be well studied this way, and rightly understand himself, adventure thereupon. It was as well according to wisdom as modesty that David could say, *My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*[h] In every undertaking, two things occur to be considered: what of difficulty is found therein, and what of temptation; whether it can be done, and whether it should be done. It is a folly to spend our care and pains upon that which is too hard for us to effect; and it is worse than so, to adventure upon that which most probably will bring us into sin, and hurt our souls; only the study of ourselves, weighing our power, and trying our temper, will prevent both: he that doeth this may commonly foresee what, the case being put, he shall do; that if such a temptation doth assault him in such circumstances, his inclinations will be apt to comply therewith, and he shall scarce be able to resist; that, for instance, he shall wax haughty in a state of dignity, become luxurious in abund-

* Si volumus æqui rerum omnium judices esse, hoc primum nobis suadeamus, neminem esse nostrum sine culpa.—*Sen. de Ira*

Συγγνώμην ἔφη δεῖσθαι πᾶσι τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι, πλὴν ἑαυτοῦ.—Cato Maj. Plut. p. 624.

[f] Rom. ii. 1. [g] 2 Sam. xii.

[h] Psal. cxxxi. 1.

ance of wealth, be distracted with care in a busy employment; and therefore he will not be so forward to engage himself upon such occasions, danger and mischief being so vividly pre-represented to his sight. But he that pondereth not his own heart is ready to presume, that, be the business what it will, he shall come off well; and so unadvisedly rusheth into the snare: he assumes unwieldy burdens upon his shoulders, which he soon feeleth sorely to oppress and pain him; which he can neither bear with ease, nor put off with convenience. When, for instance, the prophet told Hazael what cruelties and rapines should, when he got power and opportunity, be committed by him; you see how he was startled at the report: *Am I a dog?*[i] saith he; that is, can I be so vile and base? Yes, he might himself have perceived that he should in likelihood be so; the probability of his doing as the prophet said, had been no great news to him, if he had observed his own inclinations. Good Agur, on the other side, did better understand himself, when he prayed, *Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me.*[j] He was conscious of natural infirmity, and therefore afraid of being in a condition that might prevail upon it; of great wealth, lest it should tempt him to forgetfulness and neglect of God (*lest*, saith he, *I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?*) of extreme want, lest it should put him upon unjust, dishonest, and impious courses to maintain his life (*lest*, adds he, *I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*) He saw, by looking into himself, that self-love (the root of pride and injustice) was potent in him, and formidable, when occasion should favour it, and therefore, by imploring divine aid, he strove to decline the advantages and occasions of it. It was good counsel which Xenophon tells us the oracle gave Crœsus, consulting about the success of his attempt against Cyrus, Σαυτὸν γινώσκων εὐδαίμων Κροῖσε περήσεις· *Knowing thyself, thou shalt pass on happily,*[k] (in the course of thy life and undertakings.) Had he, considering his own ability, in relation to the dubious event of things (that as he could not promise himself good fortune, so he did not know how he should comport with bad; being not sure that he should overcome either his enemies or himself) — thus, I say, had he complied with the oracle's advice, he might have escaped the loss and sorrow which befell him. So is it with us: if we know not the burden of our vessel, we shall either put more sail to it than it can bear, or less than will suffice to carry it on; it will be overladen, or want fit ballast. If we are ignorant of our capacities, we shall either soar too high with a dangerous confidence, or grovel below in a sluggish listlessness: studying ourselves will help to preserve us in a middle pitch, will direct us in a moderate course, wherein we may proceed with sufficient courage and alacrity, with a prudent foresight, or at least with a comfortable hope of good success.

7. Near to that lies another considerable benefit attending this practice, which is, that it will help to render us expedite in our resolutions, and constant to them; consistent with ourselves, and uniform in our proceedings; whence will arise both great convenience to ourselves and satisfaction to others with whom we deal or converse: as on the contrary side, from the neglect thereof, we shall become slow in deliberation, doubtful in resolution, and unstable in performance. When any occasion of acting is presented, we shall be ready to close with what is agreeable to our inclination, and not repugnant to our judgment, if by due study and experience we are acquainted with them: that acquaintance is a certain preparation to a speedy choice; and we shall upon the same grounds constantly adhere to our choice, standing upon so firm a base; and so shall neither discompose ourselves, nor disappoint others by our irresolution and inconstancy. But he that skills not his own heart, first will dwell long upon consultation (not feeling perfectly whither his inward bias doth draw him;) and when he seems, upon some superficial reason, to have determined on one side, some discordance to his own inclination, or some latent prejudice, soon discovering itself, he wavers, and at length falls off; finding that he hath promised to himself, or others, what he is unable or unwilling to per-

[i] 2 Kings xii. 8.
[j] Prov. xxx. 8.
[k] De Cyri Instit. 7.

form; so, like St. James's[l] two-souled man, he is unsteady in all his ways. The hard student of himself is like a man that hath his estate *in numerato*, in ready cash, all in his hand, or at his command; he can presently tell what he can do, and satisfy those he hath to do with. Go to him, you may know where to have him, even just where you left him, or where he uses to be; you may expect a sudden despatch, and you may rely upon his word; for he knows beforehand what he doeth, and shall continue to like; why he determines so or so; and cannot be removed from his well-grounded purpose (that which is by the philosopher termed *ratio nec dissidens, nec hæsitans*,[m] a reason that doth not strive, nor stick, he is master of.) But he that neglects this practice, what he hath any title to, lieth dispersed, and laid up in corners unknown to himself, so that himself cannot come readily by it; you can hardly tell where to find him; you must wait his resolution; and when it is told you, you cannot be assured thereof, nor anywise satisfied that he will stick to his word, or his mind: he knows not thoroughly what he would have himself; can you then hope for a certain answer from him? He cannot well trust himself; can you then rely upon him? He will find himself mistaken and crossed in his own choice; can you expect less? *Quid est sapientia? semper idem velle, atque idem nolle:*[n] Constancy to a man's self is, saith he, the very being of wisdom: however, nothing more beseems a man, more commends him to society, and suits him to business, is more pleasant and grateful to those who have to do with him, than such a clear, uniform, steady disposition of mind; such a smooth and even tenor of action; nothing renders conversation and commerce more unpleasant, than a fickle lubricity of humour, and unaccountable deformity of behaviour: that study therefore is very useful, which conduceth to breed and maintain the one, and which removeth the other.

8. Again, another valuable convenience of this practice is, that it disposeth unto and preserveth a man's mind in a sober temper, agreeable to his state, and to the circumstances into which he is cast; such a temper I mean as that which the Wise Man prescribes, where he saith, *In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider.*[o] It is apt to beget either a comfortable joy, or a wholesome regret, according as the interior condition of his soul (that wherein the chief cause of the one or of the other affection is grounded) doth seasonably and justly require. To be transported with mirth and jollity in a state of grievous misery, when reason itself demands sorrow and pity; to be sad and dumpish when all things flow prosperously; either of those will seem marvellously incongruous, and argue a kind of stupidity in him that so behaves himself. Now there is not in truth any calamity so disastrous as that which befalls us within ourselves, no prosperity so worthily delightful as the good proceeding of affairs in our souls: it is the most excellent pleasure a man is capable of, that which doth spring from the being conscious, that his mind doth εὐοδοῦσθαι,[p] as St. John speaks, that is, go well forward in a happy course, that good thoughts freely do spring up, that good inclinations are strong and prevalent, that good habits of mind wax vigorous, that the love of goodness is improved, that he generally doth thrive in health and strength spiritual. No increase of treasure can affect the covetous, no rising in power and dignity can satisfy the ambitious, no enjoyment of sensual entertainments can ravish the voluptuous man with so true or great content, as the sensible proficiency in virtuous and pious dispositions of soul, growing *richer unto God*, and stronger in the hopes of his favour, do produce in him that doth affect it, and can perceive it: it is a joy in all respects incomparable; only wise and reasonable, pure and innocent, firm and durable. As on the other hand, if it be so that we discern, that within our hearts bad thoughts do swarm and multiply, bad appetites do sway, bad customs do encroach upon us; that desire of and delight in good things decay; that we become more dark, dull, unsettled in our spiritual apprehensions, more feeble and languid in our prosecutions of

[l] James i. 8. [m] Sen. de Vit. B. 8.
[n] Sen. Ep. 20.
[o] Eccles. vii. 14 [p] 3 John i. 2.

virtue, it is a great benefit to have a timely remorse prompting and urging us to endeavour a deliverance from so unhappy a condition: but no man can well either enjoy that comfortable delight, or be affected with this profitable sorrow, who doth not with a careful attention view his heart, and descry how things go there. This consideration mindeth of a further and more general advantage accruing from this practice; which is this, that,

9. A serious inspection into our hearts doth much avail toward the reformation of our hearts and lives; curing the distempers and correcting the vices of them. For to the curing any disease it is requisite to know the complexion and temper of the patient, and the part affected, and the next causes thereof. As the most grievous of bodily diseases are seated in, or do proceed from, the entrails; but not all of them from the same one of them; and the same disease depends upon the distemper sometimes of one, sometimes of another among them: so do all vices (as our Saviour expressly teacheth) issue from the heart, or interior man;[q] some from one, some from another part or region thereof; and the same from different parts: sometimes natural temper, sometimes false opinion, sometimes evil custom, is the root of the same kind of disease; and it is expedient we should know distinctly which of them in particular cases is the root, that accordingly we may understand what method of cure to use, whence to fetch the remedy, where to apply it; for unskilfulness in these points may frustrate our endeavours of amendment. If the mischief proceed from natural inclination, we must not hope ever utterly to subdue it, nor to free ourselves suddenly from the incursions thereof; nor is bare reasoning a proper weapon against it, it being grounded in the original constitution of the soul, either immediately, or as linked to the body; which by no operation of our mind can be soon altered; for, *No wisdom* (as Seneca speaketh well) *can remove the natural vices of body or mind*; *what is infixed and inbred may be allayed by art, not subdued.**

* Nulla sapientia naturalia corporis aut animi vitia ponuntur: quicquid infixum et ingenitum est lenitur arte, non vincitur.—*Sen. Ep.* 11.

q Matt. xv. 18.

Reason alone and directly is not able to grapple therewith; she will break her teeth upon so tough and knotty matter: it will weary her arms in vain to swim against the rapid current of natural propension; the violent eruptions thereof may indeed somewhat be restrained; occasions of complying therewith may often be declined; it may in time, and by degrees, be weakened by subtracting the food and incentives thereof: but especially devils of this kind must, as our Saviour instructeth us, be ejected by humble, earnest, and frequent invocation of divine assistance; without which other means commonly will prove ineffectual. But if the vice proceed only from ill habit, or the prevalence of bad custom, we are to oppose a contrary custom thereto, presently disusing that practice, and acting otherwise, so shall we easily remove and extirpate it:* if neither of these causes are discernible, we may presume our indisposition is derived from ill opinion; and that consequently our best course of redressing it, is to examine the reason of the thing; to get clear and right apprehensions concerning it. For example, if we observe ourselves apt to be frequently transported with anger, let us look into our hearts, and take notice whether the root of that distemper be a choleric complexion, or whether it arise from an habitual indulgence to ourselves of being moved upon slight causes, whereby a peevish humour is grown upon us; or whether it cometh from vain conceits of ourselves, as of persons unto whom extraordinary deference and observance is due, so that no man should presume to dissent from our opinion, or contravene our desire; and as we find, so we must respectively proceed in repressing the causes of this disease; praying, if it arise from nature, to the Omnipotent (the only Lord and Commander of nature), that he would by his grace free us from that inflammable temper, and enable us to govern our passion; withal shunning occasions of being provoked; abstaining from such diet, such business, such company, as naturally do kindle or ferment that humour: if the malady grow from custom, using ourselves to bear patiently harsh words, unkind dealings, cross ac-

* Τί φθείρει τὸ ἔθος; ἐναντίον ἔθος.—Epict.

cidents; if our opinion dispose us thereto, reasoning ourselves into moderate conceits about ourselves, considering the reasons that may acquit or excuse others to us upon occasion of offence: using all, or some of these means, or the like, such as the observation of our heart shall discover to us to be most proper and suitable to the nature or to the cause of this distemper infesting us, we shall wholly, or in good part, rid ourselves from it. Again (to adjoin another example, the matter seeming to deserve our heed), suppose we experience ourselves inclining to covetousness, eager in getting, solicitous in keeping, unwilling to part with our goods upon reasonable occasion (for the maintenance of our convenient respect in the world, or for relieving the needs of our brethren, or for serving the public, or for promoting the interests of piety and virtue;) let us then look, and see whether this ariseth from a natural straitness, hardness, suspiciousness, or diffidence of heart (some such dispositions may be observed in men), or from being, by our education, or manner of life, inured to such a love of getting, or of sparing, or of tenacity; or whether it springs from conceits about the worth or the necessity of wealth (that, without being furnished with heaps of treasure, we shall come into danger of want or disgrace; we shall not be able to maintain our life, or uphold our credit; we shall not enjoy any thing, or be any bodies among men;) let us, I say, by examining our hearts, find out from which of these springs this sordid disposition floweth, and accordingly strive to correct it; either praying to Almighty God, that he would enlarge and supple our heart, if it be natural to us; or addicting ourselves upon reasonable occasion to liberality and free expense, if custom hath therein prevailed upon us; or if vain surmises have seduced us, rectifying our judgments; as by other good discourses, proper against that brutish vice, so especially by considering that God is most good and bountiful, and tender of our being overwhelmed with need; that he continually watcheth over us, so that he cannot but see, and will regard what we want; and that he faithfully hath promised, if we endeavour to please him, and use a moderate diligence in honest ways to maintain ourselves, that he will yield his blessing, and never will leave us destitute. So in all cases we may proceed discreetly in the cure of our spiritual distempers, and in withstanding the temptations to sin that assault us, if we do but search into our hearts, and learn thence, whence they flow, and by what they are nourished.

10. This practice further doth particularly serve to regulate our devotions and performances more immediately spiritual, by showing us what we need to pray for, what we are obliged to give thanks for, what it becomes us to confess and deprecate: for want thereof, we shall be apt not only to neglect, but indecently to confound, yea miserably to pervert these duties; to confound them by praying for what is already given us, is put into our hand, or lies within our reach; for which therefore we are not to pray, but to render thanks; also by giving thanks formally for that which perhaps we are far from possessing, and do most want; so, I say, we shall be apt to confound and misplace, to render vain and chimerical in a sort, our spiritual addresses, as wanting due ground and object; yea to pervert them by asking for things really prejudicial and hurtful to us (in the circumstances we stand), and thanking God for what in anger and judgment he dispenseth to us (so indeed are many appearing goods, grateful to present sense), as also deprecating things most beneficial and useful, and healthful to our souls; neglecting to return thanks for what God disposeth in mercy (so are many things at present bitter and unsavoury to our carnal appetite and fancy;) thus from ignorance of ourselves, and what we truly need, are we apt to pervert our devotions, not only defeating ourselves of the advantages they might yield us, but (if God be not more gracious than to hearken to us, and to grant our wishes*) bringing lamentable mischief on ourselves. Many examples of these confusions and perverse misapplications of devotion both scripture affords, and experience will suggest, if we observe them. You know the comparison in the Gospel between the devotions of the Pharisee and the Publican, with the different ac-

* Evertere domos totas optantibus ipsis
Dii faciles, &c. *Juv. Sat.* 10.

r Psal. lxxiii. 18; Heb. xii. 11.

ceptance they found:[s] the one was prompt enough to give thanks for the graces he had received, and the advantages he conceived that he had in his qualities and in his performances above others; but not having duly studied himself, did not perceive that he was rather bound to ask pardon for the pride of his heart, and the vanity that adhered to his performances, which rendered his thanksgiving very improper and unseasonable. The other being conscious of his demerits and wants, with a manner suitable to his condition, in words few, but full and fit, did confess his unworthiness (which to do did best beseem him), and implored mercy (which was the thing he chiefly needed;) so was his discreet prayer better accepted than the other's impertinent thanksgiving: *I tell you* (saith our Saviour) *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*[t] The two sons of Zebedee, conceiting that our Lord would shortly become a great prince, and affecting to become favourites then, did confidently sue for the next place of dignity about him: our Lord repressed their fond ambition by downright telling them first, that *they knew not what they asked;*[u] then by demanding of them whether they were able to undergo the trials they should meet with; implying what they should rather have requested, that they more needed humility and patience, than pomp and pleasure: and it was the same two persons, whose intemperate zeal he otherwhere checked with an οὐκ οἴδατε οἱου πνεύματος, *Ye know not of what spirit ye are:*[v] and no wonder, if they, who knew not what they were, did ask they knew not what; that, being ignorant of their own hearts, they should indite absurd petitions; that in such a case they should desire things, not only incongruous and inconvenient, but dangerous and destructive to themselves. For to make a right distinction of these duties; to be able discreetly and pertinently, if I may so speak, to converse with God, it is requisite to look into our hearts, and from them to take fit matter, due measure, right season of request, and of acknowledgment respectively; things commonly not being as they appear to our present sense, or to our gross conceit, in themselves, or in their degree, good or bad; but according to the disposition of our hearts, and the effects they work upon them. That is not good which pleaseth our sense and fancy; nor that bad which disgusts them; but that is good, which rendereth our heart wiser and better, which correcteth our inclinations, composeth our affections, informeth our judgments rightly, and purifieth our intentions; that is bad, which hath contrary effects within us. We, it is likely, should pray with greatest seriousness and earnestness for the removal of those infirmities, for ease from those afflictions; which we see the holy apostles (being better instructed in things, being more acquainted with themselves) did rejoice, did glory in, did give thanks for; as finding the wholesome operation they had upon their hearts;[w] that by them their virtues were exercised and improved, their faith tried, their patience increased, their hope confirmed; that, to use the apostle's words, they did *in the sequel return the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who were exercised by them.*[x] But leaving this point, though deserving perhaps further consideration, I proceed, and say further, that,

11. The continual visitation of our inward parts doth not only yield much advantage (as in some measure hath been showed) at the long-run, by influence at the spring-head upon the principles and causes of action, but doth immediately conduce to good practice, preventing and stifling in the very birth many sinful and vain practices: that so many indiscreet and impertinent, so many irregular and unsavoury, so many unjust and uncharitable speeches do issue from our mouths, it is especially because we are not then employed upon this duty; are not watching over our hearts, and observing those inward fountains (levity and wantonness of thought, precipitancy and disorder of passion) from whence they overflow: were we intent there, we should perhaps endeavour to stop the current, and contain these inward bad motions from venting themselves. The like we may say concerning many unwarrantable actions, into which we inconsiderately plunge our-

[s] Luke xviii.
[t] Luke xviii. 14.
[u] Matt. xx. 21.
[v] Luke ix. 55.
[w] James i. 2; Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 6; Gal. vi. 14; 1 Pet. i. 6.
[x] Heb. xii. 11.

selves, not heeding whence they spring: did we regard that such actions were arising from ambitious, covetous, froward dispositions, or from certain ill-grounded prejudices lurking in our minds, we should often surely forbear them: but while we keep none, or bad sentinels; while in the custody of our hearts we sleep, or are drowsy; while we neglect to examine and weigh our actions, what they are and whence they come, they (although very bad and hurtful) do steal by us, and pass as friends, and we hear no more of them, but in their woful consequences. What efficacy the consideration of God's omnipresent eye, beholding all our doings, hath, and how all wise men do press it as a powerful means to contain us from bad action, you cannot but well know; as likewise that some of them, in order to the same purpose, direct us to conceive ourselves always under the inspection of some person especially venerable for his worth, or for his relation to us, whom we should be afraid or ashamed to displease;[x] and surely, were the faith concerning God's presence, or the fancy concerning the presence of a Cato, or a Lælius, strong enough, they could not but have great effect: however, did we but live, even in our own presence, under the eye of our own judgment and conscience; regarding not only the matter and body, but the reason and ground, that is the soul, of our actings; even that would do much; the love and reverence of ourselves would somewhat check and control us; we should fear to offend, we should be ashamed to vilify even ourselves by fond or foul proceedings; it would, in the philosopher's esteem, supply the room of any other keeper or monitor, if we could thus keep ourselves;[y] *If* (saith he) *we have so far profited, as to have got a reverence of ourselves, we may then well let go a tutor, or pedagogue.**

12. This practice doth much conduce to the knowledge of human nature, and the general dispositions of mankind, which is an excellent and most useful part of wisdom: for the principal inclinations and first emotions of the soul are like in all men; whence he that by diligent study of himself hath observed them in his own soul, may thence collect them to be in others; he hath at least a great advantage of easily tracing them, of soon descrying them, of clearly perceiving them in those he converseth with; the which knowledge is of great use, as directing us how to accommodate ourselves in our behaviour and dealing with others.

No man indeed can be a good instructor or adviser in moral affairs, who hath not attained this skill, and doth not well understand the nature of man: his precepts and rules will certainly be fallacious, or misapplied without it: this is that, which rendered the dictates of the Stoics and other such philosophers so extravagant and unpracticable, because they framed them not according to the real nature of man, such as is existent in the world, but according to an idea formed in their own imaginations.

Some caution indeed is in this matter to be used, that those motions of soul, which proceed from particular temper and complexion, from supervenient principles or habits, may be distinguished from those which are natural and common unto all: which distinction to make, is of great use and benefit, in order to the governing, restraining, or correcting them.

If there be any in us, which are not observable in any other men; or in other men, which are not in us; those do not arise from common nature, but from the particular disposition of one or other respectively.

13. I add lastly, that universally this practice is requisite and necessary for the well governing of our heart. Politicians inculcate much, that to the well governing of a people, squaring fit laws for it, and keeping it in good order, the nature and humour of that people should be chiefly heeded and well understood; for that the grave Romans and light Greeks, the soft Persians and stout Germans, the subtle Africans and gross Scythians, would not be well managed in the same manner. So to govern any man's heart (since the hearts of men, as their faces, and as their voices, differ according to diversities of complexion, of age, of education, of custom, and manner of living),

* Cum jam profeceris tantum, ut sit tibi etiam tui reverentia, licebit dimittas pædagogum. —*Seneca.*

[x] Sen. Ep. xi. 25. [y] Sen. Ep. 25.

it conduceth to know how it is disposed from any of those, or the like causes.[a] But how we are to guide and govern our hearts, and what particular influence this practice hath thereupon, I reserve for other meditations; when we shall endeavour more distinctly to show how we may apply our thoughts to due objects; how curb and correct our inclinations; how order our passions; how rectify our opinions; how purify our intentions: now I conclude with the good Psalmist's requests to God Almighty: *Teach us thy way, O Lord; unite our hearts to fear thy name. Give us understanding, and we shall keep thy law; yea we shall observe it with our whole heart. Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts; see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.*[b] *Amen.*

SERMON XLVI.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.—*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

THIS Psalm is upon several peculiar accounts very remarkable; for its antiquity, in which it perhaps doth not yield to any parcel of scripture; for the eminency of its author, Moses, the man of God, the greatest of the ancient prophets) most in favour, and, as it were, most intimate with God:) it is also remarkable for the form and matter thereof, both affording much useful instruction. In it we have a great prince, the Governor of a numerous people, sequestering his mind from the management of public affairs to private meditations; from beholding the present outward appearances, to considering the real nature and secret causes of things; in the midst of all the splendour and pomp, of all the stir and tumult about him, he observes the frailty of human condition, he discerns the providence of God justly ordering all; this he does not only in way of wise consideration, but of serious devotion, moulding his observations into pious acknowledgments and earnest prayers to God: thus while he casts one eye upon earth, viewing the occurrences there, lifting up the other to heaven, there seeing God's all-governing hand, thence seeking his gracious favour and mercy. Thus doth here that great and good man teach us all (more particularly men of high estate and much business) to find opportunities of withdrawing their thoughts from those things which commonly amuse them (the cares, the glories, the pleasures of this world), and fixing them upon matters more improvable to devotion; the transitoriness of their condition, and their subjection to God's just providence; joining also to these meditations suitable acts of religion, due acknowledgments to God, and humble prayers. This was his practice among the greatest encumbrances that any man could have; and it should also be ours. Of those his devotions addressed to God, the words are part, which I have chosen for the subject of my meditation and present discourse; concerning the meaning of which I shall first touch somewhat; then propound that observable in them, which I design to insist upon.

The prophet David hath in the 39th Psalm a prayer very near in words, and of kin, it seems, in sense to this here: *Lord* (prays he) *make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am:*[a] concerning the drift of which place, as well as of this here, it were obvious to conceive that both these prophets do request of God, that he would discover to them the definite term of their life (which by his decree he had fixed, or however by his universal prescience he did discern; concerning which we have these words in Job, *Seeing man's days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass;*[b]) we might, I say, at first hearing, be apt to imagine that their prayer unto God is (for the comfort of their mind burdened with afflictions, or for their better direction in the management of their remaining time of life), that God would reveal unto them the determinate length of their life. But this

[a] *Vide* Naz. Orat. 1.
[b] Psal. lxxxvi. 11; cxix. 34; cxxxix. 23.

[a] Psal. xxxix. 4. [b] Job xiv. 5.

sense, which the words seem so naturally to hold forth, is by many of the Fathers rejected, for that the knowledge of our lives' determinate measure is not a fit matter of prayer to God; that being a secret reserved by God to himself, which to inquire into savours of presumptuous curiosity: the universal validity of which reason I will not debate; but shall defer so much to their judgment, as to suppose that the numbering of our days (according to their sense) doth here only imply a confused indefinite computation of our days' number, or the length of our life; such as, upon which it may appear, that necessarily our life cannot be long (not, according to the account mentioned in this Psalm, the same with that of Solon in Herodotus, above 70 or 80 years, especially as to purposes of health, strength, content;) will probably, by reason of various accidents, to which it is exposed, be much shorter (7 or 10 years, according to a moderate esteem;) may possibly, from surprises undiscoverable, be very near to its period; by few instants removed from death (a year, a month, a day, it may be somewhat less.) This I shall allow to be the arithmetic that Moses here desires to learn; whence it will follow, that teaching (or making to know, so it is in the Hebrew) doth import here (as it doth otherwhere frequently in scripture) God's affording the grace to know practically, or with serious regard to consider this state and measure of our life (for in speculation no man can be ignorant of human life's brevity and uncertainty; but most men are so negligent and stupid, as not to regard it sufficiently, not to employ this knowledge to any good purpose.*) This interpretation I choose, being in itself plausible enough, and countenanced by so good authority; yet the former might well enough (by good consequence, if not so immediately) serve my design; or be a ground able to support the discourse I intend to build upon the words; the subject whereof briefly will be this, that the consideration of our lives certain and necessary brevity and frailty, is a mean proper and apt to dispose us toward the wise conduct of our remaining life; to which purpose such a consideration seems alike available, as the knowledge of its punctual or definite measure; or more than it, upon the same or greater reasons.

As for the latter clause, *that we may apply our hearts to wisdom;* it is according to the Hebrew, *and we shall bring the heart to wisdom;* implying, the application of our hearts to wisdom to be consequent upon the skill and practice (bestowed by God) of thus computing our days. As for wisdom, that may denote either sapience, a habit of knowing what is true; or prudence, a disposition of choosing what is good: we may here understand both, especially the latter; for, as Tully saith of philosophy, *Omnis summa philosophiæ ad beate vivendum refertur*,[c] the sum or whole of philosophy refers to living happily; so all divine wisdom doth respect good practice. The word also comprehends all the consequences and adjuncts of such wisdom (for so commonly such words are wont by way of metonymy to denote, together with the things primarily signified, all that naturally flow from, or that usually are conjoined with them:*) in brief (to cease from more explaining that which is in itself conspicuous enough), I so understand the text, as if the prophet had thus expressed himself: Since, O Lord, all things are in thy hand and sovereign disposal; since it appears that man's life is so short and frail, so vexatious and miserable, so exposed to the just effects of thy displeasure; we humbly beseech thee so to instruct us by thy wisdom, so to dispose us by thy grace, that we may effectually know, that we may seriously consider, the brevity and uncertainty of our lives' durance; whence we may be induced to understand, regard, and choose those things which good reason dictates best for us; which, according to true wisdom, it most concerns us to know and perform. From which sense of the words we might infer many useful documents, and draw matter of much wholesome discourse; but passing over all the rest, I shall only insist upon that

* Οὐ γὰρ ἐστι φρένας ἔχοντος ἀνθρώπου ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς ἐστι θνητὸν, οὐδ' ὅτι γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ἀποθανεῖν.—Plut. ad Apoll. p. 202.

Quis est tam stultus, quamvis sit adolescens, cui sit exploratum se vel ad vesperum esse victurum?—*Cic. de Sen.*

* Natura dedit usuram vitæ, tanquam pecuniæ, nulla præstituta die.—*Tusc. Quæst.* i. p. 326

[c] De Fin. ii. p. 95.

one point, which I before intimated, viz. that the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a proper instrument conducible to the bringing our hearts to wisdom, to the making us to discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things as are truly best for us; that it is available to the prudent conduct and management of our life; the truth of which proposition is grounded upon the divine prophet's opinion: he apprehended such a knowledge or consideration to be a profitable means of inducing his heart to wisdom; wherefore he prays God to grant it him in order to that end, supposing that effect would proceed from this cause. And that it is so in way of reasonable influence, I shall endeavour to show by some following reasons.

I. The serious consideration of our lives' frailty and shortness will confer to our right valuation (or esteem) of things, and consequently to our well placing, and our duly moderating our cares, affections, and endeavours about them.[d] For as we value things, so are we used to affect them, to spend our thought upon them, to be earnest in pursuance or avoiding of them. There be two sorts of things we converse about, good and bad; the former, according to the degree of their appearance so to us (that is, according to our estimation of them), we naturally love, delight in, desire, and pursue; the other likewise, in proportion to our opinion concerning them, we do more or less loathe and shun. Our actions therefore being all thus directed and grounded, to esteem things aright both in kind and degree (*ἑκάστῳ ἀποδιδοναι τὴν ἀξίαν*, to assign every thing its due price, as Epictetus speaks; *quanti quidque sit judicare*, to judge what each thing is worth, as Seneca*), is in order the first, in degree a main part of wisdom; and as so is frequently by wise men commended. Now among qualities that commend or vilify things unto us, duration and certainty have a chief place; they often alone suffice to render things valuable or contemptible. Why is gold more precious than glass or crystal? why prefer we a ruby before a rose or a gilliflower? It is not because those are more serviceable, more beautiful, more grateful to our senses, than these (it is plainly otherwise;) but because these are brittle and fading, those solid and permanent: these we cannot hope to retain the use or pleasure of long; those we may promise ourselves to enjoy so long as we please. Whence, on the other side, is it, that we little fear or shun any thing, how painful, how offensive soever, being assured of its soon passing over, the biting of a flea, or the prick in letting blood? The reason is evident; and that in general nothing can on either hand be considerable (either to value or disesteem) which is of a short continuance. Upon this ground, therefore, let us tax the things concerning us, whether good or bad, relating to this life, or to our future state; and first the good things relating to this life; thence we shall be disposed to judge truly concerning them, what their just price is, how much of affection, care, and endeavour they deserve to have expended on them. In general, and in the lump concerning them all, St. Paul tells us, that *τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου παράγει, the* shape or *fashion* (all that is apparent or sensible) in *this present world doth flit, and soon gives us the goby;*[e] we gaze a while upon these things, as *in transitu*, or *intra conspectum*, as they pass by us,* and keep a while in sight; but they are presently gone from us, or we from them: they are but like objects represented in a glass; which having viewed a while, we must shortly turn our backs, or shut our eyes upon them; then all vanishes, and disappears unto us. Whence he well infers an indifferency of affection toward them; a slackness in the enjoyment of them to be required of us; a *using this world, as if we used it not;* a *buying, as if we were not to possess;* a *weeping, as if we wept not;* and a *rejoicing, as if we rejoiced not;* a kind of negligence and unconcernedness about these things. *The world* (saith St. John) *passeth away, and the desire thereof;*[f] whatever seemeth

* Primum est, ut quanti quidque sit judices; secundum, ut impetum ad illa capias ordinatum temperatumque; tertium, ut inter impetum tuum, actionemque conveniat, ut in omnibus istis tibi ipsi consentias,—*Sen. Ep.* 89.

[d] 1 John i. 17,—Love not the world; for—the world passeth away, and the desire thereof.

* —— *πάντα παρέρχεται ἡμᾶς,*
Εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ πάντα παρερχόμεθα.
Gr. Epig. Anthol.

[e] 1 Cor. vii. 31.

[f] 1 John ii. 17,—Ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ.

most lovely and desirable in the world is very flitting; however, our desire and our enjoyment thereof must suddenly cease. Imagine a man, therefore, possessed of all worldly goods, armed with power, flourishing in credit, flowing with plenty, swimming in all delight (such as were sometime Priamus, Polycrates, Crœsus, Pompey;) yet since he is withal supposed a man, and mortal, subject both to fortune and death, none of those things can he reasonably confide or much satisfy himself in; they may be violently divorced from him by fortune, they must naturally be loosed from him by death; the closest union here cannot last longer than till death us depart: wherefore no man upon such account can truly call or (if he consider well) heartily esteem himself happy; a *man cannot* hence (as the most able judge and trusty voucher of the commodities doth pronounce) *receive profit or content from any labour he taketh* (upon these transitory things) *under the sun.*[g] Why, then, let me inquire, do we so cumber our heads with care, so rack our hearts with passion, so waste our spirits with incessant toil about these transitory things? Why do we so highly value, so ardently desire, so eagerly pursue, so fondly delight in, so impatiently want, or lose, so passionately contend for and emulate one another in regard to these bubbles; forfeiting and foregoing our homebred most precious goods, tranquillity and repose, either of mind or body, for them? Why erect we such mighty fabrics of expectation and confidence upon such unsteady sands?* Why dress we up these our inns, as if they were our homes, and are as careful about a few nights' lodging here, as if we designed an everlasting abode? we that are but *sojourners and pilgrims* here, and have *no fixed habitation* upon earth; who *come forth like a flower, and are soon cut down; flee like a shadow, and continue not; are winds passing away, and coming not again; who fade all like a leaf; whose life is a vapour appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away; whose days are a handbreadth, and age is nothing; whose days are consumed like smoke, and years are spent as a tale; who wither like the grass*, upon which we feed, *and crumble as the dust*, of which we are compacted;[h] (for thus the scripture by apposite comparisons represents our condition;) yet we build, like the men of Agrigentum, as if we were to dwell here for ever; and hoard up, as if we were to enjoy after many ages; and inquire, as if we would never have done knowing. The citizens of Croton, a town in Italy, had a manner, it is said, of inviting to feasts a year before the time, that the guests in appetite and garb might come well prepared to them: do we not usually resemble them in this ridiculous solicitude and curiosity; *spes inchoando longas*, commencing designs, driving on projects, which a longer time than our life would not suffice to accomplish? How deeply do we concern ourselves in all that is said or done; when the morrow, all will be done away and forgotten; when (excepting what our duty to God and charity towards men requires of us, and that which concerns our future eternal state) what is done in the world, who gets or loses, which of the spokes in fortune's wheel is up, and which down, is of very little consequence to us! But the more to abstract our minds from, and temper our affections about these secular matters, let us examine particularly by this standard, whether the most valued things in this world deserve that estimate which they bear in the common market, or which popular opinion assigns them.

1. To begin, then, with that which takes the cheif place, which the world most dotes on, which seems most great and eminent among men; secular state and grandeur, might and prowess, honour and reputation, favour and applause of men, all the objects of human pride and ambition: of this kind, St. Peter thus pronounces, πᾶσαδ ὸξα ἀνθρώπου. *All the glory of men is as the flower of the grass; the grass is dried up, and the flower thereof doth fall off;*[i] it is as the flower of the grass, how specious soever, yet the most fading and failing part thereof; the grass itself will soon wither, and the flower doth commonly fall off before

* Commorandi natura nobis diversorium dedit, non habitandi locum.—*Cic. de Sen.*

[g] Eccl. i. 3, &c.

[h] 1 Pet. ii. 11, 1; Heb. xiii. 11; xi. 15; 1 Chron. xxix. 15; Job. xiv. 1; Psal. lxxviii. 39; James iv. 14; Isa. lxiv. 6; Psal. cii. 3; xc. 5, 9; ciii. 15; xxxix. 5; cxliv. 4; cxix. 19; Psal. ciii. 15; Isa. xl. 6.

[i] 1 Pet. ii. 24.

that. We cannot hold this flower of worldly glory beyond our short time of life; and we may easily much sooner be deprived of it: many tempests of fortune may beat it down, many violent hands may crop it; it is apt of itself to fade upon the stalk; however the sun (the influence of age and time) will assuredly burn and dry it up, with our life that upholds it. *Surely* (saith the Psalmist) *men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie:*[j] men of high degree; the mighty princes, the famous captains, the subtile statesmen, the grave senators; they who turn and toss about the world at their pleasure; who, in the prophet's language, *make the earth tremble, and shake kingdoms:*[k] even these, they are a lie (said he, who himself was none of the least considerable among them, and by experience well knew their condition, the greatest and most glorious man of his time, king David.) They are a lie; that is, their state presents something of brave and admirable to the eye of men; but it is only *deceptio visus;* a show without a substance; it doth but delude the careless spectators with false appearance; it hath nothing under it solid or stable; being laid in the balance (the royal prophet there subjoins; that is, being weighed in the scales of right judgment, being thoroughly considered), it will prove lighter than vanity itself; it is less valuable than mere emptiness, and nothing itself. That saying sounds like an hyperbole; but it may be true in a strict sense, seeing that the care and pains in maintaining it, the fear and jealousy of loosing it, the envy, obloquy and danger that surround it, the snares it hath in it, and temptations inclining men to be puffed up with pride, to be insolent and injurious, to be corrupted with pleasure (with other bad concomitants thereof), do more than countervail whatever either of imaginary worth or real convenience may be in it. Perhaps, could it, without much care, trouble, and hazard, continue for ever, or for a long time, it might be thought somewhat considerable: but since its duration is uncertain and short; since *man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish;* that they who look so *like gods,* and are called so, and are worshipped as such, *yet must die like men,* like men, yea *like sheep shall be laid in the grave;* since, as it is said of the king of Babylon in Isaiah, *their pomp must be brought down to the grave, and the noise of their viols; the worm shall be spread under them, and the worm shall cover them;*[l] seeing that a moment of time shall extinguish all their lustre, and still all that tumult about them; that they must be disrobed of their purple, and be clothed with corruption; that their so spacious and splendid palaces must soon be exchanged for close darksome coffins; that both their own breath, and the breath of them who now applaud them, must be stopped; that they who now bow to them, may presently trample on them; and they, who to-day trembled at their presence, may the morrow scornfully insult upon their memory; *Is this the man* (will they say, as they did of that great king) *who made the earth to tremble; that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the kingdoms thereof?*[m] Since this is the fate of the greatest and most glorious among men, what reason can there be to admire their condition, to prize such vain and short-lived pre-eminences? For who can account it a great happiness to be styled and respected as a prince, to enjoy all the powers and prerogatives of highest dignity for a day or two; then being obliged to descend into a sordid and despicable estate? Who values the fortune of him that is brought forth upon the stage to act the part of a prince; though he be attired there, and attended as such, hath all the garb and ceremony, the ensigns and appurtenances of majesty about him; speaks and behaves himself imperiously, is flattered and worshipped accordingly; yet who in his heart doth adore this idol, doth admire this mockery of greatness? Why not? Because after an hour or two the play is over, and this man's reign is done. And what great difference is there between this and the greatest worldly state? between Alexander in the history, and Alexander on the stage? Are not (in the Psalmist's account) *all our years spent as a tale that is told,*[n] or as a

[j] Psal. lxii. 9. [k] Isa. xiv. 17.

[l] Psal. lxxxii. 6; xlix. 12, &c.; Isa. xiv. 11.
[m] Isa. xiv. 16. [n] Psal. xc

fable that is acted? This, in comparison of that, what is it at most but telling the same story, acting the same part a few times over? What are a few years more than a few hours repeated not very often? not so often as to make any considerable difference: so a great emperor reflected; *τί διαφέρει τριήμερος τριγενήτου*; *What* (said he) *doth the age of an infant, dying within three days, differ from that of Nestor, who lived three ages of men?*[o] since both shall be past and ended; both then meet, and thereby become equal; since, considering the immense time that runs on, and how little a part thereof any of us takes up (*juvenes et senes in æquo sumus*[p]) we are all alike young and old, as a drop and a pint bottle in compare to the ocean are in a sort equal, that is, both altogether inconsiderable.* *Quid enim diu est, abi finis est?* saith St. Austin: *what can be long that shall be ended?* which coming to that pass is as if it never had been? Since, then, upon this account (upon worldly accounts I speak all this; and excepting that dignity and power may be talents bestowed by God, or advantages to serve God, and promote the good of man; excepting also the relation persons justly instated in them bear to God, as his deputies and ministers; in which respects much reverence is due to their persons, much value to their places; even the more, by how much less their present outward estate is considerable, and because at present they receive so slender a reward for all their cares and pains employed in the discharge of their offices; this I interpose to prevent mistake, lest our discourse should seem to disparage or detract from the reverence due to persons in eminent place. But since, under this caution) all worldly power and glory appear so little valuable, the consideration hereof may avail to moderate our affections about them, to quell all ambitious desires of them, and all vain complacencies in them. For why should we so eagerly seek and pursue such empty shadows, which if we catch, we in effect catch nothing: and whatever it is, doth presently slip out of our hands? Why do we please ourselves in such evanid dreams? Is it not much better to rest quiet and content in any station wherein God hath placed us, than to trouble ourselves and others in climbing higher to a precipice, where we can hardly stand upright, and whence we shall certainly tumble down into the grave? This consideration is also a remedy proper to remove all regret and envy grounded upon such regards. For why, though suppose men of small worth or virtue should flourish in honour and power, shall we repine thereat? Is it not as if one should envy to a butterfly its gaudy wings, to a tulip its beautiful colours, to the grass its pleasant verdure; that grass, to which in this Psalm we are compared; *which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening is cut down and withereth?*[q] I may say of this discourse with the philosopher, *ἰδιωτικὸν μέν, ὅμως δὲ ἀντικὸν βοήθημα*,[r] it is a homely remedy (there may be divers better ones), yet hath its efficacy; for David himself made use thereof more than once: *Be not* (saith he) *afraid*, or troubled, *when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend with him. I was* (saith he again) *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked: but I went into the sanctuary, then understood I their end; surely thou didst set them in slippery places—how are they brought into desolation as in a moment!*[s] Thus considering the lubricity and transitoriness of that prosperity, which foolish and wicked men enjoyed, did serve to cure that envious distemper which began to affect the good man's heart.

2. But let us descend from dignity and power (that is, from names and shows) to somewhat seeming more real and substantial, to riches; that great and general idol, the most devoutly adored that ever hath been in the world; which hath a temple almost in every house, an altar in every heart; to the gaining of which most of the thoughts, most of the labours of men immediately tend; in the possession of which men commonly deem the greatest happiness doth consist. But this

* Mihi ne diuturnum quidem quidquam videtur, in quo est aliquid extremum, &c.—*Cic. de Senect.*

[o] Anton. iv. 50. [p] Sen. Ep. xcix. 21. [q] Psal. xc. 6. [r] Ant. iv. § 50. [s] Psal. xlix. 16; lxxiii. 3, 17; xxxvii. 1.

consideration we discourse about will easily discover, that even this, as all other idols, is *nothing in the world*,[t] nothing true and solid; will, I say, justify that advice, and verify that assertion of the Wise Man: *Labour not for riches; wilt thou set thy heart upon that which is not?*[u] it, well applied, will pluck down the high places reared to this great of idol of clay in men's hearts; will confute the common conceits and phrases, which so beautify wealth;[v] showing that whoever dotes thereon is more truly and properly styled a miserable man, than a happy or blessed one: for is he not indeed miserable who *makes lies his refuge*, who confides in that which will deceive and disappoint him? The prophet assures us so: *Woe* (saith the prophet Habakkuk) *woe be to him who coveteth an evil covetousness to his house; that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil.* Men, he implies, imagine, by getting riches, they have secured and raised themselves above the reach of all mischief: but ye see it was in the prophet's judgment a woful mistake. St. Paul doth warn men, very emphatically, *not to hope* ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, *in the uncertainty*, or obscurity, *of riches;*[w] intimating, that to trust in them, is to trust in darkness itself; in that wherein we can discern nothing; in we know not what. They are, we cannot but observe, subject to an infinity of chances, many of them obvious and notorious; more of them secret and unaccountable. *They make* (the Wise Man tells us) *themselves wings* (they need, it seems, no help for that), *and fly away like an eagle toward heaven*[x] (quite out of sight, and beyond our reach, they of their own accord do swiftly fly away:) however, should they be disposed to stay with us, we must fly from them; were they inseparably affixed to this life, yet must they together with that be severed from us; as we came naked of them into this world, so naked shall we return: *As he came* (saith the Preacher) *so shall he go; and what profit* (then) *hath he that laboured for the wind?*[y] from hence, that we must so soon part with riches, he infers them to be but wind; a thing not anywise to be fixed or settled; which it is vain to think we can appropriate or retain; and vain, therefore, greedily to covet or pursue: so the Psalmist also reasons it: *Surely every man* (saith he) *walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*[z] Men, in his account, that troubleth themselves in accumulating wealth, did but idly delude themselves, fancying to receive content from such things, which they must themselves soon be separated from; and leave at uncertainties, to be disposed of they know not how: that which in his wise son's esteem was sufficient to make *a man hate all his labour under the sun*: *Because* (saith he) *I shall leave it to the man that shall be after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet he shall have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun:*[a] all, it seems, that we are so wise and so industrious about, that we so beat our heads about, and spend our spirits upon, is at most but *gaudium hæredis, the joy of an heir*, and that an uncertain one (for your son, your kinsman, your friend, may, for all you can know, die before you, or soon after you;*) it is but a being at great pains and charges in tilling the land, and sowing and dressing it; whence we are sure not to reap any benefit to ourselves, and cannot know who shall do it.

The rich man (St. James tells us) *as the flower of the grass shall he pass away; for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion thereof perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade in his ways.*[b] All the comfort (we see by the apostle's discourse) and the convenience, all the grace and ornament, that riches are supposed to yield, will certainly wither and decay, either before or with us; whenever the sun (that is, either some extreme mischance in life, or the

[t] 1 Cor. viii. 4. [u] Prov. xxiii. 5.
[v] Ὄλβιος, Beatus, &c. pro divite. — Hab. ii. 9.
[w] 1 Tim. vi. 19. [x] Prov. xxiii. 5.
[y] Job i. 21; xxvii. 19; 1 Tim. vi. 7; Eccl. v. 21.

* In his elaborant, quæ sciunt nihil omnino ad se pertinere; serunt arbores, quæ alteri sæculo prosint.—*Sic. de Senect.*

[z] Psal. xxxix. 6.
[a] Eccl. ii. 18. [b] James i. 11.

certain destiny of death) doth arise, and make impression on them. But our Saviour hath best set out the nature and condition of these things, in that parable concerning the man, who, having had a plentiful crop of corn, and having projected for the disposal of it, resolved then *to bless himself*,[c] and entertain his mind with pleasing discourses, that having in readiness and security so copious accommodations, he might now enjoy himself with full satisfaction and delight; not considering, that, though his barns were full, his life was not sure; that God's pleasure might soon interrupt his pastime; that the fearful sentence might presently be pronounced: *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee; and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall?** Euripides calls riches φιλόψυχον χρῆμα, *a thing which much endears life*, or makes men greatly love it; but they do not at all enable to keep it: there is no ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς, *no* price or *ransom equivalent to life*; *all that a man hath, he would give* to redeem it; but it is a purchase too dear for all the riches in the world to compass. So the Psalmist tells us: *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious.*[d] They cannot redeem their brother's soul or life, nor therefore their own; for all souls are of the same value, all greatly surpass the price of gold and silver. Life was not given us for perpetuity, but lent, or deposited with us;[e] and without delay or evasion it must be resigned into the hand of its just owner, when he shall please to demand it; and although righteousness may, *yet riches* (as the Wise man tells us) *cannot deliver from death, nor at all profit us in the day of wrath.*[f] Could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands; nay, could we foresee some considerably long definite time, in which we might enjoy our stores, it were perhaps somewhat excusable to scrape and hoard, it might look like rational providence, it might yield some valuable satisfaction; but since, *Rape, congere, aufer, posside, satim relinquendum est;* since, as Solomon tells us, *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to every generation;*[g] yea, since they must be left very soon, nor is there any certainty of keeping them any time; that one day may consume them, one night may dispossess us of them and our life together with them, there can be no reason why we should be solicitous about them; no account given of our setting so high a rate upon them. For who would much regard the having custody of a rich treasure for a day or two, then to be stript of all, and left bare? to be to-day invested in large domains, and to-morrow to be dispossessed of them? No man surely would be so fond, as much to affect the condition.[h] Yet this is our case; whatever we call ours, we are but guardians thereof for a few days. This consideration, therefore, may serve to repress or moderate in us all covetous desires, proud conceits, vain confidences and satisfactions in respect to worldly wealth; to induce us, in Job's language, *not to make gold our hope, nor to say to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; not to rejoice because our wealth is great, and because our hand hath gotten much;*[i] to extirpate from our hearts that root of all evil, the love of money. For if, as the Preacher thought, the greatest pleasure or benefit accruing from them is but looking upon them for a while, (*what good*, saith he, *is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes!*) if a little will, nay must, suffice our natural appetites, and our present necessities; if more than needs is but, as the scripture teaches us, *a trouble*, disquieting our minds with care; *a* dangerous *snare*,[k] drawing us into mischief and sorrow; if this, I say, be their present quality; and were it better, yet could it last for any certain, or any long continuance; is it not evidently better to enjoy that pittance God hath allotted us with ease and contentation of mind; or if we want a necessary supply, to employ only a moderate diligence in getting thereof by the fairest means, which, with God's blessing promised thereto, will never fail to procure a

* Τινι ἔσται.
[c] Luke xii. 20.
[d] Psal. xlix.
[e] Luke xii. 20.
[f] Prov. xi. 4.
[g] Prov. xxvii. 24.
[h] Sen. Ep. 98.
[i] Job xxxi. 24.
[j] Eccl. v. 11.
[k] Eccl. v. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 9.

competence, and with this to rest content;* than with those in Amos, *to pant after the dust of the earth; to lade themselves with thick clay;* to thirst insatiably after floods of gold, to heap up mountains of treasure, to extend unmeasurably our possessions (*joining house to house, and laying field to field, till there be no place, that we may be placed alone in the midst of the earth,*[l] as the prophet Isaiah doth excellently describe the covetous man's humour;) than, I say, thus incessantly to toil for the maintenance of this frail body, this flittering breath of ours? If divine bounty hath freely imparted a plentiful estate upon us, we should indeed bless God for it; *making ourselves friends*[m] thereby, as our Saviour advises us, employing it to God's praise and service; to the relief and comfort of our brethren that need: but to seek it earnestly, to set our heart upon it, to rely thereon, to be greatly pleased or elevated in mind thereby, as it argues much infidelity and profaneness of heart, so it signifies much inconsiderateness and folly, the ignorance of its nature, the forgetfulness of our own condition, upon the grounds discoursed upon.

3. Now in the next place; for pleasure, that great witch, which so enchants the world, and which by its mischievous baits so allures mankind into sin and misery; although this consideration be not altogether necessary to disparage it (its own nature sufficing to that; for it is more transitory than the shortest life, it dies in the very enjoyment), yet it may conduce to our wise and good practice in respect thereto, by tempering the sweetness thereof, yea souring its relish to us; minding us of its insufficiency and unserviceableness to the felicity of a mortal creature; yea, its extremely dangerous consequences to a soul that must survive the short enjoyment thereof. Some persons, indeed, ignorant or incredulous of a future state; presuming of no sense remaining after death, nor regarding any account to be rendered of this life's actions, have encouraged themselves and others in the free enjoyment of present sensualities, upon the score of our life's shortness and uncertainty; inculcating such maxims as these:

——Brevis est hic fructus homullis;
——post mortem nulla voluptas.—*Lucr.*

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die;[n] because our life is short, let us make the most advantageous use thereof we can;* because death is uncertain, let us prevent its surprisal, and be aforehand with it, enjoying somewhat, before it snatches all from us. The author of Wisdom observeth, and thus represents these men's discourse: *Our life is short and tedious; and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave:—Come on, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of voluptuousness—for this is our portion, and our lot is this.*[o] Thus, and no wonder, have some men, conceiving themselves beasts, resolved to live as such; renouncing all sober care becoming men, and drowning their reason in brutish sensualities; yet no question, the very same reflection, that this life would soon pass away, and that death might speedily attack them, did not a little quash their mirth, and damp their pleasure. To think, that this perhaps might be the last banquet they should taste of; that they should themselves shortly become the feast of worms and serpents, could not but somewhat spoil the gust of their highest delicacies, and disturb the sport of their loudest jovialties; but in Job's expression, *make the meat in their bowels to turn, and be as the gall of asps within them.*[p] Those customary enjoyments did so enamour them of sensual delight, that they could not without pungent regret imagine a necessity of soon for ever parting with them; and so their very pleasure was by this thought made distasteful

* Simplici cura constant necessaria, in delicias laboratur.—*Sen. Ep.* 89.

[l] Matt. vi.; Heb. xiii. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 8; Psal. lv. 26; Amos ii. 6; Hab. ii. 6; Isa. v. 8.
[m] Luke. xvi. 9.

* Quem sors dierum cunque dabit, lucro
Appone; nec dulces amores
Sperne puer, &c. *Hor.* i. 9.

[n] 1 Cor. xv. 32. [o] Sap. ii. 1, &c.
[p] Job xx. 14.

and imbittered to them. So did the Wise Man observe: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions; unto the man that hath nothing to vex him; and that hath prosperity in all things; Yea*, adds, he, *unto him, that is yet able to receive meat!*[q] And how bitter, then, must the remembrance thereof be to him, who walloweth in all kind of corporeal satisfaction and delight; that placeth all his happiness in sensual enjoyment! However, as to us, who are better instructed and affected; who know and believe a future state; the consideration, that the time of enjoying these delights will soon be over; that this world's jollity is but like the *crackling of thorns under a pot*[r] (which yields a brisk sound, and a cheerful blaze, but heats little, and instantly passes away;) that they leave no good fruits behind them, but do only corrupt and enervate our minds; war against and hurt our souls; tempt us to sin, and involve us in guilt; that therefore Solomon was surely in the right, when he said of *laughter*, that *it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it?*[s] (that is, that the highest of these delights are very irrational impertinences;) and of intemperance, that, at the last, *it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder;* with us, I say, who reflect thus, that (*πρόσκαιρος ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσις*) *enjoyment of sinful pleasure for a season* cannot obtain much esteem and love;[t] but will rather, I hope, be despised and abhorred by us. I will add only,

4. Concerning secular wisdom and knowledge; the which men do also commonly with great earnestness and ambition seek after, as the most specious ornament, and pure content of their mind;* this consideration doth also detect the just value thereof; so as to allay intemperate ardour toward it, pride and conceitedness upon the having or seeming to have it, envy and emulation about it. For imagine, if you please, a man accomplished with all varieties of learning commendable, able to recount all the stories that have been ever written, or the deeds acted, since the world's beginning; to understand, or with the most delightful fluency and elegancy to speak all the languages that have at any time been in use among the sons of men; skilful in twisting and untwisting all kinds of subtilties; versed in all sorts of natural experiments, and ready to assign plausible conjectures about the causes of them; studied in all books whatever, and in all monuments of antiquity; deeply knowing in all the mysteries of art, or science, or policy, such as have ever been devised by human wit, or study, or observation; yet all this, such is the pity, he must be forced presently to abandon; all the use he could make of all his notions, the pleasure he might find in them, the reputation accruing to him from them, must at that fatal minute vanish; *his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither he goeth. It is seen* (saith the Psalmist, seen indeed every day, and observed by all) *that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish person perisheth; one event happeneth to them both; there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever;*[u] (both die alike, both alike are forgotten;) as the wisest man himself did (not without some distaste) observe and complain. All our subtile conceits and nice criticism, all our fine inventions and goodly speculations, shall be swallowed up either in the utter darkness, or in the clearer light, of the future state. One potion of that Lethean cup (which we must all take down upon our entrance into that *land of forgetfulness*[v]) will probably drown the memory, deface the shape of all those ideas with which we have here stuffed our minds:* however, they are not like to be of use to us in that new, so different, state; where none of our languages are spoken; none of our experience will suit; where all things have quite another face, unknown, unthought of by us; where Aristotle and Varro shall appear mere idiots; Demosthenes and Cicero shall become very infants; the wisest and eloquentest Greeks

* Δοκεῖ γοῦν ἡ σοφία θαυμαστὰς ἡδονὰς ἔχειν καθαριότητι, καὶ τῷ βεβαίῳ.—Arist. Eth. x. 7.

* Τὴν δ' Ἰσοκράτους διατριβὴν ἐπισκώπτων, γηρᾶν φησι παρ' αὑτῷ τοὺς μαθητὰς, ὡς ἐν ᾄδου χρησομένους ταῖς τέχναις, καὶ δίκας ἐροῦντας.—Cato Sen. apud Plut. p. 641, edit. Steph.

[q] Ecclus. xli. 1. [r] Eccl. vii. 6. [s] Eccl. ii. 2. [t] Prov. xxiii. 32; Heb. xi. 25. [u] Psal. cxlvi. 4; Eccl. ix. 10; Psal. xlix. 10; Eccl. ii. 14, 16, &c. [v] Psal. lxxxviii. 12.

will prove senseless and dumb barbarians; where all our authors shall have no authority; where we must all go fresh to school again; must unlearn, perhaps, what in these misty regions we thought ourselves best to know, and begin to learn what we not once ever dreamed of. Doth, therefore, I pray you, so transitory and fruitless a good (for itself I mean, and excepting our duty to God, or the reasonable diligence we are bound to use in our calling), deserve such anxious desire, or so restless toil; so careful attention of mind, or assiduous pain of body about it? doth it become us to contend, or emulate so much about it? Above all, do we not most unreasonably, and against the nature of the thing itself we pretend to (that is, ignorantly and foolishly) if we are proud and conceited, much value ourselves or condemn others, in respect thereto? Solomon, the most experienced in this matter, and best able to judge thereof, (he that gave his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that had been done under heaven, and this with extreme success; even he) passeth the same sentence of vanity, vexation, and unprofitableness, upon this, as upon all other subcelestial things. True, he commends wisdom as an excellent and useful thing comparatively; *exceeding folly, so far as light exceedeth darkness*;* but since light itself is not permanent, but must give way to darkness, the difference soon vanished, and his opinion thereof abated; considering, that as it happened to the fool, so it happened to him, he breaks into that expostulation, *And why then was I more wise?* to what purpose was such a distinction made, that signified in effect so little? And indeed the testimony of this great personage may serve for a good epilogue to all this discourse, discovering sufficiently the slender worth of all earthly things: seeing he, that had given himself industriously to experiment the worth of all things here below, to sound the depth of their utmost perfection and use; who had all the advantages imaginable of performing it; who flourished in the greatest magnificences of worldly pomp and power; who enjoyed an incredible affluence of all riches; who tasted all varieties of most exquisite pleasure; whose heart was (by God's special gift, and by his own industrious care) enlarged with all kind of knowledge (furnished with notions many *as the sand upon the sea-shore*[w]) above all that were before him; who had possessed and enjoyed all that fancy could conceive, or heart could wish, and had arrived to the top of secular happiness; yet even *he* with pathetical reiteration pronounces all to be *vanity and vexation of spirit;* altogether unprofitable and unsatisfactory to the mind of man. And so therefore we may justly conclude them to be; so finishing the first grand advantage this present consideration affordeth us in order to that wisdom, to which we should apply our hearts.

I should proceed to gather other good fruits, which it is apt to produce, and contribute to the same purpose; but since my thoughts have taken so large scope upon that former head, so that I have already too much, I fear, exercised your patience, I shall only mention the rest. As this consideration doth, as we have seen, first, dispose us rightly to value these temporal goods, and moderate our affections about them; so it doth, secondly, in like manner, conduce to the right estimation of temporal evils; and thereby to the well tempering our passions in the resentment of them; to the begetting of patience and contentedness in our minds. Also, thirdly, it may help us to value, and excite us to regard those things, good or evil, which relate to our future state; being the things only of a permanent nature, and of an everlasting consequence to us. Fourthly, it will engage us to husband carefully and well employ this short time of our present life: not to defer or procrastinate our endeavours to live well; not to be lazy and loitering in the despatch of our only considerable business, relating to eternity; to embrace all opportunities, and improve all means, and follow the best compendiums of good practice leading to eternal bliss. Fifthly, it will be apt to confer much toward the begetting and preserving sincerity in our thoughts, words, and actions; causing us to decline all oblique

* Διπλοῦν ὁρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα—Eccl. ii. 15.

[w] 1 Kings iv. 29.

designs upon present mean interests, or base regards to the opinions or affections of men; bearing single respects to our conscience and duty in our actions; teaching us to speak as we mean, and be what we would seem; to be in our hearts and in our closets, what we appear in our outward expressions and conversations with men. For considering, that within a very short time all the thoughts of our hearts shall be disclosed, and all the actions of our lives exposed to public view (being strictly to be examined at the great bar of divine judgment before angels and men), we cannot but perceive it to be the greatest folly in the world, for this short present time to disguise ourselves; to conceal our intentions, or smother our actions. What hath occurred, upon these important subjects, to my meditation, I must at present, in regard to your patience, omit. I shall close all with that good collect of our church:—

Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

SERMON XLVII.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.—*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

In discoursing formerly upon these words (expounded according to the most common and passable interpretation), that which I chiefly observed was this: That the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a fit mean or rational instrument subservient to the bringing our hearts to wisdom;* that is, to the making us discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things, as according to the dictates of right reason are truly best for us.

1. The truth of which observation I largely declared from hence, that the said consideration disposeth us to judge rightly about those goods (which ordinarily court and tempt us, viz. worldly glory and honour; riches, pleasure, knowledge; to which I might have added wit, strength, and beauty), what their just worth and value is; and consequently to moderate our affections, our cares, our endeavours about them; for that if all those goods be uncertain and transitory, there can be no great reason to prize them much, or to affect them vehemently, or to spend much care and pains about them.

2. I shall next in the same scales weigh our temporal evils; and say, that also the consideration of our lives' brevity and frailty doth avail to the passing a true judgment of, and consequently to the governing our passions, and ordering our behaviour in respect to all those temporal evils, which either according to the law of our nature, or the fortuitous course of things, or the particular dispensation of Providence do befall us. Upon the declaration of which point I need not insist much, since what was before discoursed concerning the opposite goods doth plainly enough infer it; more immediately indeed in regard to the *mala damni*, or *privationis* (the evils which consist only in the want or loss of temporal goods), but sufficiently also by a manifest parity of reason in respect to the *mala sensus*, the real pains, crosses, and inconveniences that assail us in this life. For if worldly glory do hence appear to be no more than a transient blaze, a fading show, a hollow sound, a piece of theatrical pageantry, the want thereof cannot be very considerable to us. Obscurity of condition (living in a valley beneath that dangerous height, and deceitful lustre) cannot in reason be deemed a very sad or pitiful thing, which should displease or discompose us: if we may thence learn that abundant wealth is rather a needless clog, or a perilous snare, than any great convenience to us, we cannot well esteem to be poor a great infelicity, or to undergo losses a grievous calamity; but rather a benefit to be free from the

* Job xiv. 14,—All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

distractions that attend it; to have little to keep for others, little to care for ourselves. If these present pleasures be discerned hence to be only wild fugitive dreams; out of which being soon roused we shall only find bitter regrets to abide; why should not the wanting opportunities of enjoying them be rather accounted a happy advantage, than any part of misery to us? If it seem, that the greatest perfection of curious knowledge, of what use or ornament soever, after it is hardly purchased, must soon be parted with; to be simple or ignorant will be no great matter of lamentation: as those will appear no solid goods, so these consequently must be only *umbræ malorum*,[b] phantasms, or shadows of evil, rather than truly or substantially so (evils created by fancy, and subsisting thereby; which reason should, and time will, surely remove;) that in being impatient or disconsolate for them, we are but like children, that fret and wail for the want of petty toys. And for the more real or positive evils, such as violently assault nature, whose impressions no reason can so withstand, as to extinguish all distaste or afflictive sense of them; yet this consideration will aid to abate and assuage them; affording a certain hope and prospect of approaching redress. It is often seen at sea, that men (from unacquaintance with such agitations, or from brackish steams arising from the salt water) are heartily sick, and discover themselves to be so by apparently grievous symptoms; yet no man hardly there doth mind or pity them, because the malady is not supposed dangerous, and within a while will probably of itself pass over; or that however the remedy is not far off; the sight of land, a taste of the fresh air will relieve them: it is near our case: we, passing over this troublesome sea of life; from unexperience, joined with the tenderness of our constitution, we cannot well endure the changes and crosses of fortune: to be tossed up and down; to suck in the sharp vapours of penury, disgrace, sickness, and the like, doth beget a qualm in our stomachs; make us nauseate all things, and appear sorely distempered: yet is not our condition so dismal as it seems; we may grow hardier, and wear out our sense of affliction; however, the land is not far off, and by disembarking hence we shall suddenly be discharged of all our molestations. It is a common solace of grief, approved by wise men, *si gravis, brevis est; si longus, levis;* if it be very grievous and acute, it cannot continue long without intermission or respite; if it abide long, it is supportable;* intolerable pain is like lightning, it destroys us, or is itself instantly destroyed. However, death at length (which never is far off) will free us; be we never so much tossed with storms of misfortune, that is a sure haven; be we persecuted with never so many enemies, that is a safe refuge; let what pains or diseases soever infest us, that is an assured anodynon, and infallible remedy for them all; however we be wearied with the labours of the day, the night will come and ease us; the grave will become a bed of rest unto us. Shall I die?† I shall then cease to be sick; I shall be exempted from disgrace; I shall be enlarged from prison; I shall be no more pinched with want; no more tormented with pain. Death is a winter, that as it withers the rose and lily, so it kills the nettle and thistle; as it stifles all worldly joy and pleasure, so it suppresses all care and grief; as it hushes the voice of mirth and melody, so it stills the clamours and the sighs of misery; as it defaces all the world's glory, so it covers all disgrace, wipes off all tears, silences all complaint, buries all disquiet and discontent. King Philip of Macedon once threatened the Spartans to vex them sorely, and bring them into great straits; but, answered they, *can he hinder us from dying?*‡ That indeed is a way of evading which no enemy can obstruct, no tyrant can debar men from;

[b] Sen. Ep. 89.

* Θάρσει· πόνου γὰρ ἄκρον οὐκ ἔχει χρόνον.—Æschyl. apud Plutarch. de Aud. Poet. sub finem.
Τὸ μὲν ἀφόρητον ἐξάγει· τὸ δὲ χρονίζον φορητόν.—Ant. vii. § 33.
Summi doloris intentio invenit finem: nemo potest valde dolere et diu: sic nos amantissima nostri natura disposuit, ut dolorem aut tolerabilem, aut brevem faceret.—*Sen. Ep.* 74.

† Dolore perculsi mortem imploramus, eamque unam, ut miseriarum malorumque terminum exoptamus.—*Cic. Consolat.*
Moriar? hoc dicis; desinam ægrotare posse, &c.—*Sen. Ep.* 24.

‡ Ἀδην ἔχων βοηθόν, οὐ τρέμω σκιάς.
Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest; at nemo mortem.—*Sen. Trag.*

they who can deprive of life and its conveniences, cannot take away death from them. There is a place, Job tells us, *where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest: where the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor: the small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.*[c] It is, therefore, but holding out a while, and a deliverance from the worst this world can molest us with shall of its own accord arrive unto us; in the mean time it is better that we at present owe the benefit of our comfort to reason, than afterward to time;* by rational consideration to work patience and contentment in ourselves; and to use the shortness of our life as an argument to sustain us in our affliction, than to find the end thereof only a natural and necessary means of our rescue from it. The contemplation of this cannot fail to yield something of courage and solace to us in the greatest pressures; these transient and short-lived evils, if we consider them as so, cannot appear such horrid bugbears as much to affright or dismay us; if we remember how short they are, we cannot esteem them so great, or so intolerable.† There be, I must confess, divers more noble considerations, proper and available to cure discontent and impatience. The considering, that all these evils proceed from God's just will and wise providence; unto which it is fit, and we upon all accounts are obliged, readily to submit; that they do ordinarily come from God's goodness and gracious design toward us; that they are medicines (although ungrateful, yet wholesome) administered by the Divine Wisdom to prevent, remove, or abate our distempers of soul (to allay the tumours of pride, to cool the fevers of intemperate desire, to rouse us from the lethargy of sloth, to stop the gangrene of bad conscience;) that they are fatherly corrections, intended to reclaim us from sin, and excite us to duty; that they serve as instruments or occasions to exercise, to try, to refine our virtue; to beget in us the hope, to qualify us for the reception of better rewards: such discourses indeed are of a better nature, and have a more excellent kind of efficacy; yet no fit help, no good art, no just weapon, is to be quite neglected in the combat against our spiritual foes: a pebble-stone hath been sometimes found more convenient than a sword or a spear to slay a giant. Baser remedies (by reason of the patient's constitution, or circumstances) do sometime produce good effect, when others, in their own nature more rich and potent, want efficacy. And surely frequent reflections upon our mortality, and living under the sense of our life's frailty, cannot but conduce somewhat to the begetting in us an indifferency of mind toward all these temporal occurrents; to extenuate both the goods and the evils we here meet with; consequently, therefore, to compose and calm our passions about them.

3. But I proceed to another use of that consideration we speak of emergent from the former, but so as to improve it to higher purposes. For since it is useful to the diminishing our admiration of these worldly things, to the withdrawing our affections from them, to the slackening our endeavours about them; it will follow that it must conduce also to beget an esteem, a desire, a prosecution of things conducing to our future welfare; both by removing the obstacles of doing so, and by engaging us to consider the importance of those things in comparison with these. By removing obstacles, I say; for while our hearts are possessed with regard and passion toward these present things, there can be no room left in them for respect and affection toward things future. It is in our soul as in the rest of nature; there can be no penetration of objects, as it were, in our hearts, nor any vacuity in them: our mind no more than our body can be in several places, or tend several ways, or abide in perfect rest; yet somewhere it will always be; some whither it will always go; somewhat it will ever be doing. If we *have a treasure* here (somewhat we greatly like and much confide in), *our hearts will be here*[d] with it; and if here, they cannot be otherwhere; they will be taken up, they will rest satisfied, they will not care to seek

* Ὁ μέλλεις τῷ χρόνῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦτο τῷ λόγῳ χαρίσαι.—Plut. ad Apol. p. 195.

† Omnia brevia tolerabilia esse debent, etiamsi magna sint.—*Cic. Læl. ad fin.*

[c] Job iii. 17.

[d] Matt. vi. 21.

further. If we affect worldly glory, and delight in the applause of men, we shall not be so careful to please God, and seek his favour.[e] If we admire and repose confidence in riches, it will make us neglectful of God, and distrustful of his providence :[f] if our mind thirsts after, and sucks in greedily sensual pleasures, we shall not relish spiritual delights, attending the practice of virtue and piety, or arising from good conscience :[g] adhering to, attending upon, masters of so different, so opposite a quality, is inconsistent; they cannot abide peaceably together, they cannot both rule in our narrow breasts; we shall love and hold to the one, hate and despise the other. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;*[h] the love of the world, as the present guest, so occupies and fills the room, that it will not admit, cannot hold the love of God. But when the heart is discharged and emptied of these things; when we begin to despise them as base and vain; to distaste them as insipid and unsavoury; then naturally will succeed a desire after other things promising a more solid content; and desire will breed endeavour; and endeavour (furthered by God's assistance always ready to back it) will yield such a glimpse and taste of those things, as will so comfort and satisfy our minds, that thereby they will be drawn and engaged into a more earnest prosecution of them. When, I say, driving on ambitious projects, heaping up wealth, providing for the flesh (by our reflecting on the shortness and frailty of our life), become so insipid to us, that we find little appetite to them, or relish in them; our restless minds will begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, desiring some satisfaction thence: discerning these secular and carnal fruitions to be mere husks[i] (the proper food of swine), we shall bethink ourselves of that better nourishment (of rational or spiritual comfort) which our Father's house doth afford to his children and servants. Being somewhat disentangled from the care of our farms and our traffics; from yoking our oxen, and being married to our present delights; we may be at leisure, and in disposition to comply with divine invitations to entertainments spiritual.[j] Experiencing that our trade about these petty commodities turns to small account, and that in the end we shall be nothing richer thereby; reason will induce us, with the merchant in the Gospel, *to sell all that we have* (to forego our present interests and designs) for the purchasing that *rich pearl* of God's kingdom, which will yield so exceeding profit;[k] the gain of present comfort to our conscience, and eternal happiness to our souls. In fine, when we consider seriously, that *we have here no abiding city*, but are only *sojourners and pilgrims upon earth*;[l] that all our care and pain here do regard only an uncertain and transitory state; and will therefore suddenly as to all fruit and benefit be lost unto us; this will suggest unto us, with the good patriarchs, κρείττονος ὀρέγεσθαι πατρίδος, *to long after a better country*;[m] a more assured and lasting state of life; where we may enjoy some certain and durable repose; to tend homeward, in our desires and hopes, toward those eternal mansions of joy and rest prepared for God's faithful servants in heaven. Thus will this consideration help toward the bringing us to inquire after and regard the things concerning our future state; and in the result will engage us to compare them with these present things, as to our concernment in them and the consequence of them to our advantage or damage, whence a right judgment and a congruous practice will naturally follow. There be four ways of comparing the things relating to this present life with those which respect our future state: comparing the goods of this with the goods of that; the evils of this with the evils of that; the goods of this with the evils of that; the evils of this with the goods of that. All these comparisons we may find often made in scripture; in order to the informing our judgment about the respective value of both sorts; the present consideration intervening, as a standard to measure and try them by.

First, then; comparing the present goods with those which concern our future state, since the transitoriness and

[e] John v. 44; xii. 43.
[f] Matt. vi. 24.
[g] Rom. viii. 5.
[h] 1 John ii. 15.
[i] Luke xv. 16.
[j] Matt. xxii. 5.
[k] Matt. xiii. 46.
[l] Heb. xiii. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 11.
[m] Heb. xi. 16.

uncertainty of temporal goods detract from their worth, and render them in great degree contemptible; but the durability and certainty of spiritual goods doth increase their rate, and make them exceedingly valuable; it is evident hence, that spiritual goods are infinitely to be preferred in our opinion, to be more willingly embraced, to be more zealously pursued, than temporal goods; that, in case of competition, when both cannot be enjoyed, we are in reason obliged readily to part with all these, rather than to forfeit our title unto, or hazard our hope of those. Thus in the scripture it is often discoursed: *The world* (saith St. John) *passeth away, and the desire therof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*[n] The world, and all that is desirable therein, is transient; but obedience to God's commandments is of an everlasting consequence; whence he infers, that we should *not love the world;* that is, not entertain such an affection thereto as may any way prejudice the love of God, or hinder the obedience springing thence, or suitable thereto.

All flesh is grass, saith St. Peter, *and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever*:[o] all worldly glory is frail and fading, but the word of God is eternally firm and permanent; that is, the good things by God promised to them who faithfully serve him, shall infallibly be conferred on them to their everlasting benfit; whence it follows, that, as he exhorts, we are bound to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and hope to end;[p] to proceed and persist constantly in faithful obedience to God. *Charge those* (saith St. Paul) *who are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future; that they may attain everlasting life.*[q] Since (argues he) present riches are of uncertain and short continuance; but faith and obedience to God, exercised in our charity and mercy toward men, are a certain stock improvable to our eternal interest; therefore be not proud of, nor rely upon those, but regard especially, and employ yourselves upon these. Our Saviour himself doth often insist upon and inculcate this comparison: *Treasure not unto yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but treasure up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. Do not take care for your soul, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink; nor for your body, what ye shall put on; but seek first the kingdom of God. Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth to eternal life; sell your substance, and give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old; an indefectible treasure in the heavens.*[r] Thus doth the holy scripture, setting forth the uncertainty and transitoriness of the present, the certainty and permanency of future goods, declare the excellency of these above those; advising thereupon, with highest reason, that we willingly reject those (in real effect, if need be, however always in ready disposition of mind) in order to the procuring or securing of these. It also, for our example and encouragement, commends to us the wisdom and virtue of those persons who have effectually practised this duty: of Abraham, our father, who, in expectation of that well-founded city, made and built by God, did readily desert his country and kindred, with all present accommodations of life:[s] of Moses, who disregarded the splendours and delights of a great court;[t] rejected the alliance of a great princess, and *refused to be called the son of Pharoah's daughter*. in respect to the μισθαποδοσια, that future distribution of reward; a share wherein shall assuredly fall to them who above all other considerations regard the performance of their duty to God: of the apostles, who *forsook all*, parents, brethren, lands, houses, trades, receipts of custom, to follow Christ;[u] him at present poor, and naked of all secular honour, power, wealth, and delight; in

[n] 1 John ii. 17.
[o] 1 Pet. i. 24.
[p] 1 Pet. i. 13.
[q] 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.
[r] Matt. vi. 19, 20, 25; John vi. 27; Luke xii. 33,—Θησαυρὸν ἀνέκλειπτον.
[s] Heb. xi. 10.
[t] Heb. xi. 23.
[u] Matt. xix. 27; Luke xviii. 28.

hope only to receive from him divine benefits, and future preferments in his kingdom: of Mary, who neglecting present affairs, and seating herself at Jesus's feet, attending to his discipline, is commended for her wisdom, in minding the *only necessary thing*;[v] in choosing *the better part, which could never be taken from her*: of St. Paul, who *accounted all his gains* (all his worldly interests and privileges) *to be damage*, to be *dung in respect to Christ, and the excellent knowledge of him*,[w] with the benefits thence accruing to him. On the contrary, there we have Esau condemned and stigmatized for a *profane* and a vain *person*, who (*ἀντὶ μιᾶς βρώσεως*) *for one little eating-bout*,[x] one mess of pottage (for a little present satisfaction of sense, or for the sustenance of this frail life), did withgo his birthright, that emblem of spiritual blessings and privileges. We have, again, represented to us that unhappy young gentleman,[y] who, though he had good qualities, rendering him amiable even to our Saviour, and had been trained up in the observance of God's commandments, yet not being content to part with his large possessions in lieu of the treasure by Christ offered in heaven, was reputed deficient; could find no acceptance with God, nor admission into his kingdom; for a petty temporal commodity forfeiting an infinite eternal advantage. For (saith our Saviour) *He that loveth father or mother above me; he that doth not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea his own life, for me and the Gospel, is not worthy of me, nor can be my disciple.*[z] He that in his esteem or affection doth prefer any temporal advantages before the benefits tendered by our Saviour (yea, doth not in comparison despise, renounce, and reject his dearest contents of life, and the very capacity of enjoying them, his life itself), doth not deserve to be reckoned among the disciples of Christ; to be so much as a pretender to eternal joy, or a candidate of immortality. Our Saviour rejects all such unwise and perverse traders, who will not exchange brittle glass for solid gold; counterfeit glistering stones for genuine most precious jewels; a garland of fading flowers for an incorruptible crown of glory; a small temporary pension for a vastly rich freehold; *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.*[a] Thus doth the holy scripture teach us to compare these sorts of good things;

And, secondly, so also doth it to compare the evils of both states; for that seeing, as the soon ceasing of temporal mischiefs should (in reasonable proceeding) diminish the fear of them, and mitigate the grief for them; so the incessant continuance of spiritual evils doth, according to just estimation, render them hugely grievous and formidable; it is plain that we should much more dislike, abominate, and shun spiritual evils, than temporal; that we should make no question rather to endure these paroxysms of momentary pain, than incur those chronical, and indeed incurable, maladies; that we should run willingly into these shallow plashes of present inconvenience, rather than plunge ourselves into those unfathomable depths of eternal misery. There is, I suppose, no man, who would not account it a very great calamity (such as hardly greater could befall him here) to have *his right eye plucked out*, and *his right hand cut off*, and *his foot* taken from him;[b] to be deformed and maimed, so that he can do nothing, nor stir any whither: yet our Lord represents these to us as inconsiderable evils, yea as things very eligible and advantageous in comparison of those mischiefs, which the voluntary not embracing them, in case we cannot otherwise than by so doing avoid sin, will bring on us: *συμφέρει σοι, it is* (saith he) *profitable for thee that one of thy members be lost, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell: καλόν σοι ἐστι, it is good*, it is excellent for thee *to enter into life lame and mained, and one-eyed, rather than having two hands, and two feet, and two eyes* (in all integrity and beauty of this temporal, or corporal state), *to be cast into eternal fire.* To be banished from one's native soil, secluded from all comforts of friendly acquaintance, divested irrecoverably of great estate and dignity; becoming a vagrant and a ser-

[v] Luke x. 39. [w] Phil. iii. 7. 8.
[x] Heb. xii. 16. [y] Mark x. 17.
[z] Matt. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26; Mark x. 29.
[a] 1 Pet. i. 4. [b] Matt. v. 29; xviii. 8.

vant in vile employment, in a strange country, every man would be apt to deem a wretched condition: yet Moses, we see, freely chose it, rather than by enjoying unlawful pleasures at home, in Pharaoh's court, to incur God's displeasure and vengeance:[c] *συγκακουχεῖσθαι μᾶλλον ἑλόμενος, choosing rather to undergo evil together with God's people, than to have πρόσκαιρον ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, a temporary fruition of sinful delight*, dangerous to the welfare of his soul. Death is commonly esteemed the most extreme and terrible of evils incident to man; yet our Saviour bids us not to regard or fear it, in comparison of that deadly ruin which we adventure on by offending God: *I say unto you, my friends*, saith he (he intended it for the most friendly advice), *be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have nothing further to do: but I will show you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell*,[d] to cast both body and soul into hell, and destroy them therein; *yea, I say unto you* (so he inculates and impresses it upon them), *Fear him.*

But, thirdly, considering the good things of this life together with the evils of that which is to come; since enjoying these goods, in comparison with enduring those evils, is but rejoicing for a moment in respect of mourning to eternity; if upon the seeming sweetness of these enjoyments to our carnal appetite be consequent a remediless distempering of our soul; so that what tastes like honey proves gall in the digestion, gripes our bowels, gnaws our heart, and stings our conscience for ever; if present mirth and jollity have a tendency to that dreadful weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth threatened in the gospel; if, for the praise and favour of a few giddy men here, we venture eternal shame and confusion before God and angels and all good men hereafter; if, for attaining or preserving a small stock of uncertain riches in this world, we shall reduce ourselves into a state of most uncomfortable nakedness and penury in the other; it is clear as the sun that we are downright fools and madmen, if we do not upon these accounts rather willingly reject all these good things, than hazard incurring any of those evils; for, saith truth itself, *What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world (καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν) and be endamaged as to his soul*, or lose his soul as a mulct?[e] It is a very disadvantageous bargain, for all the conveniences this world can afford, to be deprived of the comforts of our immortal state. But,

Lastly, comparing the evils of this life with the benefits of the future; since the worst tempests of this life will be soon blown over, the bitterest crosses must expire (if not before, however) with our breath; but the good things of the future state are immutable and perpetual; it is in evident consequence most reasonable, that we freely, if need be, undertake, and patiently endure these for the sake of those, that in hope of that *incorruptible inheritance, laid up for us in heaven*,[f] we not only support and comfort ourselves, but even rejoice and exult in all the afflictions by God's wise and just dispensation imposed on us here; as they in St. Peter, wherein, saith he, *ye greatly rejoice (or exult), being for a little while as in heaviness through manifold afflictions or trials.*[g] *Accounting it all joy* (saith St. *ing that the trial of your faith perfecteth patience*;[h] that is, seeing the sufferance of James) *when ye fall into divers temptations;* (that is, afflictions or trials,) *know* these present evils conduceth to the furtherance of your spiritual and eternal welfare. And, *we glory in tribulation*,[i] saith St. Paul, rendering the same account, because it tended to their soul's advantage. St. Paul, than whom no man perhaps ever more deeply tasted of the cup of affliction, and that tempered with all the most bitter ingredients which this world can produce; whose life was spent in continual agitation and unsettledness,* in all hardships of travel and labour and care, in extreme sufferance of all pains both of body and mind; in all imaginable dangers and difficulties and distresses, that nature exposes man unto, or human malice can bring upon him; in all wants

[c] Heb. xi. 25.
[d] Luke xii. 4; Matt. x. 28,—Ἀποκτεῖναι δύνανται, βλάψαι δ' οὔ.

* Ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις·
[e] Mark viii. 36; Luke ix. 25.
[f] 1 Pet. i. 4.
[g] 1 Pet. i. 6,—Ἀγαλλιᾶσθε ὀλίγον ἄρτι.
[h] James i. 2. [i] Rom. v. 8.

of natural comfort (food, sleep, shelter, liberty, health;) in all kinds of disgrace and contumely; as you may see in those large inventories of his sufferings, registered by himself, in the 6th and 11th chapters of his second Epistle to the Corinthians:[j] yet all this, considering the good things he expected afterward to enjoy, he accounted very slight and tolerable: *For* (saith he) *our lightness of affliction, that is for a little while here,* working for us a far more exceeding weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle* (of this unsteady transitory abode) *is dissolved, we are to have a tabernacle from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*[k] *I reckon* (saith he again) that is, having made a due comparison and computation, I find, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy* (that is, are not considerable, come under no rate or proportion) *in respect of the glory which shall be revealed* (or openly conferred) *upon us.*[l] The like opinion had those faithful Christians, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of whom it is said, that *being exposed to public scorn as in a theatre,† with reproaches and afflictions, they did with gladness accept the spoiling‡* (or rapine) *of their goods: knowing that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance.*[m] But the principal example (most obliging our imitation) of this wise choice, is that of our Lord himself; who, in contemplation of the future great satisfaction and reward of patient submission to the divine will, did willingly undergo the greatest of temporal sorrows and ignominies; *who*, (saith the apostle to the Hebrews, propounding his example to us) *for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.*[n]

Thus immediately, or by an easy inference, doth the consideration of this life's shortness and uncertainty confer to that main part of wisdom, rightly to value the things about which we are conversant; disposing us consequently to moderate our affections, and rightly to guide our actions about them; fitting us therefore for the performance of those duties so often enjoined us; of not caring for, not trusting in, not minding (unduly that is, and immoderately) things below; of dying to this world, and taking up our cross, or contentedly suffering, in submission to God's will, all loss and inconvenience; as also to the placing our meditation and care, our love and desire, our hope and confidence, our joy and satisfaction, our most earnest pains and endeavours, upon things divine, spiritual, and eternal.

IV. I proceed to another general benefit of that general consideration; which is, that it may engage us to a good improvement of our time; the doing which is a very considerable piece of wisdom. For if time be, as Theophrastus called it truly, *a thing of most precious value** (or expense) as it were a great folly to lavish it away unprofitably; so to be frugal thereof, and careful to lay it out for the best advantage, especially every man having so little store thereof, must be a special point of prudence. *To be covetous of time* (Seneca tells us) *is a commendable avarice;†* it being necessary for the accomplishment of any worthy enterprise; there being nothing excellent, that can soon or easily be effected. Surely he that hath much and great business to despatch, and but a little time allowed for it, is concerned to husband it well; not to lose it wholly in idleness; not to trifle it away in unnecessary divertisements; not to put himself upon other impertinent affairs; above all, not to create obstacles to himself, by pursuing matters of a tendency quite contrary to the success of his main undertakings. It is our case: we are obliged here to negotiate in business of infinite price and consequence to us; no less than the salvation of our souls, and eternal happiness: and we see, that our time to drive it on and bring it to a happy issue is very scant and short; short in itself, and very short in respect

* Τὸ γὰρ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως.
† Θεατριζόμενοι. ‡ Ἁρπαγήν.
[j] 2 Cor. xi. 23; vi. 5.
[k] 2 Cor. iv. 17; v. 1.
[l] Rom. viii. 18. [m] Heb. x. 34.
[n] Heb. xii. 2.

* Πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα.
† Nulla nisi temporis honesta est avarita.—*Sen.*

to the nature of those affairs; the great variety and the great difficulty of them. The great father of physicians did quicken the students of that faculty to diligence, by admonishing them (in the first place, setting it in the front of his famous aphorism) that *life is short, and art is long.** And how much more so is the art of living well (that most excellent and most necessary art: for indeed virtue is not a gift of nature, but a work of art; an effect of labour and study:) this, I say, most needful and useful art of living virtuously and piously; this art of spiritual physic (of preserving and recovering our soul's health), how much longer is it? how many rules are to be learnt? how many precepts to be observed in order thereto? We are bound to furnish our minds with needful knowledge of God's will and our duty; we are to bend our unwilling wills to a ready compliance with them; we are to adorn our souls with dispositions suitable to the future state (such as may qualify us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed spirits above;) it is incumbent on us to mortify corrupt desires, to restrain inordinate passions, to subdue natural propensities, to extirpate vicious habits; in order to the effecting these things, to use all fit means; devotion toward God, study of his law, reflection upon our actions, with all such spiritual instruments; the performing which duties, as it doth require great care and pains, so it needs much time: all this is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; a few spare minutes will not suffice to accomplish it. Natural inclination, that wild beast within us, will not so presently be tamed, and made tractable by us. Ill habits cannot be removed without much exercise and attendance;† as they were begot, so they must be destroyed, by a constant succession, and frequency of acts. Fleshly lust is not to be killed with a stab or two; it will fight stoutly, and rebel often, and hold out long, before with our utmost endeavour we can obtain an entire victory over it. No virtue is acquired in an instant, but by degrees, step by step; from the seeds of right instruction and good resolution it springs up, and grows forward by a continual progress of customary practice; it is a child of patience, a fruit of perseverance, that ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *enduring in doing well*,° St. Paul speaks of, and consequently a work of time; for enduring implies a good space of time. Having, therefore, so much to do, and of so great concernment, and so little a portion of time for it, it behoves us to be careful in the improvement of what time is allowed us; to embrace all opportunities and advantages offered; to go the nearest way, to use the best compendiums in the transaction of our business; not to be slothful and negligent, but active and intent about it (for as time is diminished, and in part lost by sloth or slackness; so it is enlarged, and, as it were, multiplied by industry; my day is two in respect of his, who doeth but half my work:) not, also, to consume our time in fruitless pastimes and curious entertainments of fancy; being idly busy about impertinences and trifles (we call it sport, but it is a serious damage to us;) not to immerse ourselves in multiplicities of needless care about secular matters, which may distract us, and bereave us of fit leisure for our great employment; that which our Saviour calls τυρβάζεσθαι περὶ πολλά, *to keep a great deal of do* and stir (to be jumbled about as it were, and confounded *about many things*; and, περισπᾶσθαι περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν, *to be distracted* and perplexed *about much cumbersome service*;ᵖ which St. Paul calls περιπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *to be implicated* and entangled as in a net, *with the negotiations of this present life*;ᵠ so that we shall not be expedite, or free to bestir ourselves about our more weighty affairs. The spending much time about those things doth steal it from these; yea doth more than so, by discomposing our minds so that we cannot well employ what time remains upon our spiritual concernments. But especially we should not prostitute our time upon vicious projects and practices; doing which is not only a prodigality of the present time, but an abridgement of the future; it not only doth not promote or set forward our business, but brings it backward, and makes us more work than

* Non enim dat natura virtutem; ars est bonum fieri.—*Sen. Ep.* 89.

† Τί φθείρει ἕθος; ἐναντίον ἔθος.—Epict.

° Rom. ii. 7.

ᵖ Luke x. 40.

ᵠ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

we had before; it is a going in a way directly contrary to our journey's end. The scripture aptly resembles our life to a wayfaring, a condition of travel and pilgrimage: now he that hath a long journey to make, and but a little time of day to pass it in, must in reason strive to set out soon, and then to make good speed; must proceed on directly, making no stops or deflections (not calling in at every sign that invites him, not standing to gaze at every object seeming new or strange to him; not staying to talk with every passenger that meets him; but rather avoiding all occasions of diversion and delay), lest he be surprised by the night, be left to wander in the dark, be excluded finally from the place whither he tends: so must we, in our course toward heaven and happiness, take care that we set out soon (procrastinating no time, but beginning instantly to insist in the ways of piety and virtue), then proceed on speedily, and persist constantly; nowhere staying or loitering, shunning all impediments and avocations from our progress, lest we never arrive near, or come too late unto the gate of heaven. St. Peter tells us, that the end of all things doth approach, and thereupon advises us *to be sober, and to watch unto prayer;*[r] for that the less our time is, the more intent and industrious it concerns us to be. And St. Paul enjoins us to *redeem the time, because the days are evil;*[s] that is, since we can enjoy no true quiet or comfort here, we should improve our time to the best advantage for the future: he might have also adjoined, with the patriarch Jacob, the paucity of the days to their badness; because *the days of our life are few and evil*, let us redeem the time; *man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble:*[t] so few indeed they are, that it is fit we should lose none of them, but use them all in preparation toward that great change we are to make: that fatal passage out of this strait time into that boundless eternity. So, it seems, we have Job's example of doing: *All the days* (says he) *of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*[u] I end this point with that so comprehensive warning of our Saviour: *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to escape — and to stand before the Son of man.*[v]

V. I shall adjoin but one use more, to which this consideration may be subservient, which is, that it may help to beget and maintain in us (that which is the very heart and soul of all goodness) sincerity: sincerity in all kinds, in our thoughts, words, and actions. To keep us from harbouring in our breasts such thoughts as we would be afraid or ashamed to own; from speaking otherwise than we mean, than we intend to do, than we are ready any where openly to avow; from endeavouring to seem what we are not; from being one thing in our expressions and conversations with men; another in our hearts, or in our closets: from acting with oblique respects to private interests or passions, to human favour or censure (in matters, I mean, where duty doth intervene, and where pure conscience ought to guide and govern us;) from making professions and ostentations (void of substance, of truth, of knowledge, of good purpose), great semblances of peculiar sanctimony, integrity, scrupulosity, spirituality, refinedness, like those Pharisees so often therefore taxed in the gospel; as also from palliating, as those men did, designs of ambition, avarice, envy, animosity, revenge, perverse humour, with pretences of zeal and conscience. We should indeed strive to be good (and that in all real strictness, aiming at utmost perfection) in outward act and appearance, as well as in heart and reality, for the glory of God and example of men (*providing things honest in the sight of all men;*[w]) but we must not shine with a false lustre, nor care to seem better than we are, nor intend to serve ourselves in seeming to serve God; bartering spiritual commodities for our own glory or gain. For since the day approaches when *God will judge* (τὰ κρυπτὰ ἀνθρώπων,) *the things which men do so studiously conceal;* when *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good*

[r] 1 Pet. iv. 7. [s] Eph. v. 15.
[t] Gen. xlvii. 9; Job xiv. 1.
[u] Job xiv. 14.
[v] Luke xxi. 34. [w] Rom. xii. 17.

or whether it be evil ;[x] since *we must all appear* (or rather be all made apparent, be manifested and discovered *) *at the tribunal of Christ :* since *there is nothing covered, which shall not be revealed, nor hid, that shall not be known ; so that whatever is spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the housetops :*[y] since at length, and that within a very short time (no man knows how soon), the whispers of every mouth (the closest murmurs of detraction, slander, and sycophantry) shall become audible to every ear ; the abstrusest thoughts of all hearts (the closest malice and envy) shall be disclosed in the most public theatre before innumerable spectators ; the truth of all pretences shall be thoroughly examined ; the just merit of every person and every cause shall with a most exact scrutiny be scanned openly in the face of all the world ; to what purpose can it be to juggle and baffle for a time ; for a few days (perhaps for a few minutes) to abuse or to amuse those about us with crafty dissimulation or deceit ? Is it worth the pains to devise plausible shifts, which shall instantly, we know, be detected and defeated ; to bedaub foul designs with a fair varnish, which death will presently wipe off ; to be dark and cloudy in our proceedings, whenas a clear day (that will certainly dispel all darkness and scatter all mists) is breaking in upon us ; to make vizors for our faces, and cloaks for our actions, whenas we must very shortly be exposed, perfectly naked and undisguised, in our true colours, to the general view of angels and men ? Heaven sees at present what we think and do, and our conscience cannot be wholly ignorant or insensible ; nor can earth itself be long unacquainted therewith. Is it not much better, and more easy (since it requires no pains or study) to act ourselves, than to accommodate ourselves to other unbeseeming and undue parts ; to be upright in our intentions, consistent in our discourses, plain in our dealings, following the single and uniform guidance of our reason and conscience, than to shuffle and shift, wandering after the various, uncertain, and inconstant opinions or humours of men ? What matter is it, what clothes we wear, what garb we appear in, during this posture of travel and sojourning here ; what for the present we go for ; how men esteem us, what they think of our actions ? St. Paul at least did not much stand upon it ; for, *with me*, said he, *it is a very small thing* (ἐλάχιστον, the least thing that can come under consideration) *to be judged of you, or of human day*[z] (that is, of this present transitory, fallible, reversible judgment of men.) If we mean well and do righteously, our conscience will at present satisfy us, and the divine (unerring and impartial) sentence will hereafter acquit us ; no unjust or uncharitable censure shall prejudice us : if we entertain base designs, and deal unrighteously, as our conscience will accuse and vex us here, so God will shortly condemn and punish us ; neither shall the most favourable conceit of men stand us in stead. *Every man's work shall become manifest, for the day shall declare it ; because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire* (that is, a severe and strict inquiry) *shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.*[a] I cannot insist more on this point ; I shall only say, that, considering the brevity and uncertainty of our present state, the greatest simplicity may justly be deemed the truest wisdom ; that who deceives others, doth cozen himself most ; that the deepest policy, used to compass or to conceal bad designs, will in the end appear the most downright folly.

I might add to the precedent discourses, that philosophy itself hath commended this consideration as a proper and powerful instrument of virtue, reckoning the practice thereof a main part of wisdom ;* the greatest proficient therein in common esteem, Socrates, having defined philosophy, or the study of wisdom, to be nothing else but μελέτη θανάτου, *the study of death ;* intimating also (in Plato's Phædon), that this study, the meditation of death, and preparation of his mind to leave this world, had been the constant and chief employment of his life : that likewise, according to experience, nothing more avails to render the minds of

* Οὐ γὰρ παραστῆναι ἡμᾶς ἁπλῶς δεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ φανερωθῆναι.—Chrysost.

[x] Rom. ii. 16 ; Eccl. xii. 14.

[y] 2 Cor. v. 10 ; Luke xii. 2, 3.

* Τοῦτο ἔχει ἡ τελειότης τοῦ ἤθους τὸ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν ὡς τελευταίαν διεξάγειν.—Anton. Lib. vii.

[z] 1 Cor. iv. 3.

[a] 1 Cor. iii. 13.

men sober and well composed, than such spectacles of mortality, as do impress this consideration upon them. For whom doth not the sight of a coffin, or of a grave gaping to receive a friend, perhaps, or an ancient acquaintance; however, a man in nature and state altogether like ourselves; of the mournful looks and habits, of all the sad pomps and solemnities attending man unto his long home, by minding him of his own frail condition, affect with some serious, some honest, some wise thoughts? And if we be reasonable men, we may every day supply the need of such occasions, by representing to ourselves the necessity of our soon returning to the dust; dressing in thought our own hearses, and celebrating our own funerals; by living under the continual apprehension and sense of our transitory and uncertain condition; dying daily, or becoming already dead unto this world. The doing which effectually being the gift of God, and an especial work of his grace, let us of him humbly implore it, saying after the holy prophet, *Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Amen.

SERMON XLVIII.

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM cxix. 60.—*I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

THIS Psalm (no less excellent in virtue than large in bulk) containeth manifold reflections upon the nature, the properties, the adjuncts and effects of God's law; many sprightly ejaculations about it (conceived in different forms of speech; some in way of petition, some of thanksgiving, some of resolution, some of assertion or aphorism;) many useful directions, many zealous exhortations to the observance of it; the which are not ranged in any strict order, but (like a variety of fair flowers and wholesome herbs in a wide field) do with a grateful confusion lie dispersed as they freely did spring up in the heart, or were suggested by the devout spirit of him who indited the Psalm; whence no coherence of sentences being designed, we may consider any one of them absolutely, or singly by itself.

Among them, that which I have picked out for the subject of my discourse, implieth an excellent rule of practice, authorized by the Psalmist's example: it is propounded in way of devotion or immediate address to God; unto whose infallible knowledge his conscience maketh an appeal concerning his practice; not as boasting thereof, but as praising God for it, unto whose gracious instruction and succour he frequently doth ascribe all his performances: but the manner of propounding I shall not insist upon; the rule itself is, that speedily, without any procrastination or delay, we should apply ourselves to the observance of God's commandments; the practice of which rule it shall be my endeavour to recommend and press.

It is a common practice of men that are engaged in bad courses, which their own conscience discerneth and disapproveth, to adjourn the reformation of their lives to a further time, so indulging themselves in the present commission of sin, that yet they would seem to purpose and promise themselves hereafter to repent and take up:* few resolve to persist finally in an evil way, or despair of being one day reclaimed; but immediately and effectually to set upon it, many deem unseasonable or needless; it will, they presume, be soon enough to begin to-morrow, or next day, a month or a year hence, when they shall find more commodious opportunity, or shall prove better disposed thereto:† in the mean time with Solomon's sluggard, *Yet,* (say they) *a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands:*‡ let us but neglect this duty, let us but satisfy this appetite, let us but enjoy this bout of pleasure; hereafter, God willing, we mean to be more careful, we hope that we shall become more sober: so, like bad debtors, when our conscience dunneth us, we always mean, we always promise to pay; if she will stay awhile, she shall, we tell her, be

* Recognosce singulos, considera universos, nullius non vita spectat in crastinum; non enim vivunt, sed victuri sunt.—*Sen. Ep.* 45.

† Victuros agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam.—*Manil.* 4.

‡ Prov. vi. 10.

satisfied; or, like vain spendthrifts, we see our estate fly, yet presume that it will hold out, and at length we shall reserve enough for our use. *Εἰς αὔριον τὰ σπουδαῖα, Let serious business stay till the morrow*,* was a saying, that cost dear to him who said it; yet we in our greatest concerns follow him.

But how fallacious, how dangerous, and how mischievous, this manner of proceeding is; how much better and more advisable it is, after the example propounded in our text, speedily to betake ourselves unto the discharge of our debt and duty to God, the following considerations will plainly declare.

1. We may consider, that the observance of God's commandments (an observance of them proceeding from an habitual disposition of mind, in a constant tenor of practice) is our indispensable duty, our main concernment, our only way to happiness; the necessary condition of our attaining salvation; that alone which can procure God's love and favour toward us; that unto which all real blessings here, and all bliss hereafter, are inseparably annexed: *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man*[b] (the whole duty, the whole design, the whole perfection, the sum of our wisdom, and our happiness.) *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright: God will render to every man according to his works:*[c] these are oracles indubitably clear and infallibly certain; these are immoveable terms of justice between God and Man, which never will, never can be relaxed;[d] being grounded on the immutable nature of God, and eternal reason of things: if God had not decreed, if he had not said these things, they would yet assuredly be true; for it is a foul contradiction to reason, that a man ever should please God without obeying him; it is a gross absurdity in nature, that a man should be happy without being good; wherefore all the wit in the world cannot devise a way, all the authority upon earth (yea, I dare say, even in heaven itself) cannot establish a condition, beside faithful observance of God's law, that can save or make us happy: from it there can be no valid dispensation, without it there can be no effectual absolution, for it there can be no acceptable commutation; nor, in defect thereof, will any faith, any profession, any trick or pretence whatever, avail or signify any thing: whatever expedient to supply its room, superstition, mistake, craft, or presumption may recommend, we shall, relying thereon, be certainly deluded. If, therefore, we mean to be saved (and are we so wild as not to mean it?) if we do not renounce felicity (and do we not then renounce our wits?) to become virtuous, to proceed in a course of obedience, is a work that necessarily must be performed: and why then should we not instantly undertake it? wherefore do we demur or stick at it? how can we at all rest quiet, while an affair of so vast importance lieth upon our hands, or until our mind be freed of all uncertainty and suspense about it? Were a probable way suggested to us of acquiring great wealth, honor, or pleasure, should we not quickly run about it? could we contentedly sleep, till we had brought the business to a sure or hopeful issue? and why with less expedition or urgency should we pursue the certain means of our present security and comfort, of our final salvation and happiness? In doing so, are we not strangely inconsistent with ourselves?

Again, disobedience is the certain road to perdition; that which involveth us in guilt and condemnation, that which provoketh God's wrath and hatred against us, that which assuredly will throw us into a state of eternal sorrow and wretchedness: *The foolish shall not stand in God's sight; he hateth all the workers of iniquity: If ye do not repent, ye shall perish: The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God: The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God; The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment:*[e] these are denunciations no less sure than severe, from that mouth which is never opened in vain; from the execution whereof

* Plut. in Pelop. Non est credo mihi, sapientis dicere, vivam.—*Mart.* i. 16.

[b] Eccl. xii. 13.

[c] Matt. xix. 27; Psal. xi. 7; Prov. xv. 9; Rom. ii. 6.

[d] Matt. v. 18; Luke xvi. 17; Psal. cxix. 15.

[e] Psal. v. 5; Luke xiii. 3; Psal. ix. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 9; Matt. xxv. 46; vii. 21.

there can be no shelter or refuge. And what wise man, what man in his right senses, would for one minute stand obnoxious to them? Who, that anywise tendereth his own welfare, would move one step forward in so perilous and destructive a course? the further in which he proceedeth, the more he discosteth from happiness, the nearer he approacheth to ruin.

In other cases, common sense prompteth men to proceed otherwise; for who, having rendered one his enemy that far overmatcheth him, and at whose mercy he standeth, will not instantly sue to be reconciled? Who, being seized by a pernicious disease, will not haste to seek a cure? Who, being fallen into the jaws of a terrible danger, will not nimbly leap out thence? And such plainly is our case: while we persist in sin, we live in enmity and defiance with the Almighty, who can at his pleasure crush us; we lie under a fatal plague, which, if we do not seasonably repent, will certainly destroy us; we incur the most dreadful of all hazards, abiding in the confines of death and destruction; God frowning at us, guilt holding us, hell gaping for us: every sinner is, according to the Wise Man's expression, *as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.*[f] And he that is in such a case, is he not mad or senseless, if he will not forthwith labour to swim out thence, or make all speed to get down into a safer place? Can any man with comfort lodge in a condition so dismally ticklish?

2. We may consider, that, in order to our final welfare, we have much work to despatch, the which requireth, as earnest care and painful industry, so a competent long time; which, if we do not presently fall on, may be wanting, and thence our work be left undone, or imperfect. To conquer and correct bad inclinations, to render our sensual appetites obsequious to reason, to compose our passions into a right and steady order, to cleanse our souls from vanity, from perverseness, from sloth, from all vicious distempers, and in their room to implant firm habits of virtue; to get a clear knowledge of our duty, with a ready disposition to perform it; in fine, to season our minds with holy affections, qualifying us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed spirits above; these are things that must be done, but cannot be done in a trice: it is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; but ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *a patient continuance in well-doing*,[g] is needful to achieve it; for it no time can be redundant; the longest life can hardly be sufficient: *Art is long, and life is short*, may be an aphorism in divinity as well as in physic; the art of living well, of preserving our soul's health, and curing its distempers, requireth no less time to compass it than any other art or science.

Virtue is not a mushroom, that springeth up of itself in one night when we are asleep, or regard it not; but a delicate plant, that groweth slowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to mature it, in our untoward soil, in this world's unkindly weather:* happiness is a thing too precious to be purchased at an easy rate; heaven is too high to be come at without much climbing; the crown of bliss is a prize too noble to be won without a long and a tough conflict. Neither is vice a spirit that will be conjured down by a charm, or with a presto driven away; it is not an adversary that can be knocked down at a blow, or despatched with a stab. Whoever shall pretend that at any time, easily, with a celerity, by a kind of legerdemain, or by any mysterious knack, a man may be settled in virtue, or converted from vice, common experience abundantly will confute him;† which showeth that a habit otherwise (setting miracles aside) cannot be produced or destroyed, than by a constant exercise of acts suitable or opposite thereto; and that such acts cannot be exercised without voiding all impediments, and framing all principles of action (such as temper of body, judgment of mind, influence of custom) to a compliance; that who by temper is peevish or choleric, cannot, without mastering that temper, become patient or meek;

[f] Prov. xxiii. 34.

* Οὐ καθεύδουσιν ἡμῖν χορηγεῖ Βοήθειαν ὁ Θεὸς, ἀλλὰ πονουμένοις. Chrys. ad Eph. λογ. κά.

† O quam istud parum putant, quibus tam facile videtur!—*Quint.* xii. 1.

[g] Rom. ii 7.

that who from vain opinions is proud, cannot, without considering away those opinions, prove humble; that who by custom is grown intemperate, cannot, without weaning himself from that custom, come to be sober; that who, from the concurrence of a sorry nature, fond conceits, mean breeding, and scurvy usage, is covetous, cannot, without draining all those sources of his fault, be turned into liberal. The change of our mind is one of the greatest alterations in nature, which cannot be compassed in any way or within any time we please; but it must proceed on leisurely and regularly, in such order, by such steps, as the nature of things doth permit; it must be wrought by a resolute and laborious perseverance; by a watchful application of mind, in voiding prejudices, in waiting for advantages, in attending to all we do; by forcibly wresting our nature from its bent, and swimming against the current of impetuous desires; by a patient disentangling ourselves from practices most agreeable and familiar to us; by a wary fencing with temptations, by long struggling with manifold oppositions and difficulties; whence the holy scripture termeth our practice a warfare, wherein we are to fight many a bloody battle with most redoubtable foes; a combat, which must be managed with our best skill and utmost might: a race, which we must pass through with incessant activity and swiftness.

If, therefore, we mean to be good or to be happy, it behoveth us to lose no time; to be presently up at our great task; to snatch all occasions, to embrace all means incident of reforming our hearts and lives. As those, who have a long journey to go, do take good care to set out early, and in their way make good speed, lest the night overtake them before they reach their home;* so, it being a great way from hence to heaven, seeing we must pass over so many obstacles, through so many paths of duty, before we arrive thither, it is expedient to set forward as soon as can be, and to proceed with all expedition; the longer we stay, the more time we shall need, and the less we shall have.

3. We may consider, that no future time which we can fix upon will be more convenient than the present is for our reformation. Let us pitch on what time we please, we shall be as unwilling and unfit to begin as we are now; we shall find in ourselves the same indispositions, the same averseness, or the same listlessness toward it, as now: there will occur the like hardships to deter us, and the like pleasures to allure us from our duty; objects will then be as present, and will strike as smartly upon our senses; the case will appear just the same, and the same pretences for delay will obtrude themselves; so that we shall be as apt then as now to prorogue the business. We then shall say, to-morrow I will mend; and when that morrow cometh, it will be still to-morrow; and so the morrow will prove endless.* If, like the simple rustic (who stayed by the river-side waiting till it had done running, so that he might pass dry-foot over the channel), we do conceit that the sources of sin (bad inclinations within, and strong temptations abroad) will of themselves be spent, or fail, we shall find ourselves deluded.† If ever we come to take up, we must have a beginning with some difficulty and trouble; we must courageously break through the present with all its enchantments; we must undauntedly plunge into the cold stream; we must rouse ourselves from our bed of sloth; we must shake off that brutish improvidence, which detaineth us: and why should we not assay it now? There is the same reason now that ever we can have; yea, far more reason now; for if that we now begin, hereafter at any determinate time, some of the work will be done; what remaineth will be shorter and easier to us.‡ Nay, further,

* Ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἴομεν, ὁὴ γὰρ μέμβλωκε μάλιστα
Ἦμαρ, ἀτὰρ τάχα τοι ποτὶ ἕσπερα βίγιον ἔσται.
Hom. Od. P.

* Cras hoc fiet; idem cras fiet, &c.—*Pers. Sat.* v.
Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.
Ovid. de Rom. i. *Epict.* iv. 12.

† —— qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille,
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.
Hor. Ep. i. 2.

‡ Εἰ μὲν λυσιτελὴς ἡ ὑπέρθεσίς ἐστιν, ἡ παντελὴς, ἀπόστασις αὐτῆς ἐστι λυσιτελέστερα.—Epict. iv. 12.
For the same reason we put it off, we should put it away. If it be good at all, it is good at present.

4. We may consider, that the more we defer, the more difficult and painful our work must needs prove; every day will both enlarge our task and diminish our ability to perform it.* Sin is never at a stay: if we do not retreat from it, we shall advance in it; and the further on we go, the more we have to come back; every step we take forward (even before we can return hither, into the state wherein we are at present) must be repeated; all the web we spin must be unravelled; we must vomit up all we take in: which to do we shall find very tedious and grievous.

Vice, as it groweth in age, so it improveth in stature and strength; from a puny child it soon waxeth a lusty stripling, then riseth to be a sturdy man, and after a while becometh a massy giant, whom we shall scarce dare to encounter, whom we shall be very hardly able to vanquish; especially seeing that as it groweth taller and stouter, so we shall dwindle and prove more impotent; for it feedeth upon our vitals, and thriveth by our decay; it waxeth mighty by stripping us of our best forces, by enfeebling our reason, by perverting our will, by corrupting our temper, by debasing our courage, by seducing all our appetites and passions to a treacherous compliance with itself: every day our mind groweth more blind, our will more resty, our spirit more faint, our appetites more fierce, our passions more headstrong and untameable;† the power and empire of sin do strangely by degrees encroach, and continually get ground upon us, till it hath quite subdued and enthralled us. First we learn to bear it; then we come to like it; by and by we contract a friendship with it; then we dote upon it; at last we become enslaved to it in a bondage, which we shall hardly be able or willing to shake off; when not only our necks are fitted to the yoke, our hands are manacled, and our feet shackled thereby; but our heads and hearts do conspire in a base submission thereto: when vice hath made such an impression on us, when this pernicious weed hath taken so deep root in our mind, will, and affections, it will demand an extremely toilsome labour to extirpate it.

Indeed, by continuance in sin, the chief means (afforded by nature, or by grace) of restraining or reducing us from it, are either cut off, or enervated and rendered ineffectual.

Natural modesty, while it lasteth, is a curb from doing ill; men in their first deflections from virtue are bashful and shy;* out of regard to other men's opinion, and tenderness of their own honour, they are afraid or ashamed to transgress plain rules of duty: but in process this disposition weareth out; by little and little they arrive to that character of the degenerate Jews, whom the prophets call *impudent children*, having *a brow of brass*, and faces *harder than a rock*;[h] so that they commit sin with open face, and in broad day, without any mask, without a blush; they despise their own reputation, and defy all censure of others; they outface and outbrave the world, till at length, with prodigious insolence, they come to boast of wickedness and *glory in their shame*[i] as an instance of high courage and special gallantry.

Conscience is a check to beginners in sin, reclaiming them from it, and rating them for it: but this in long standers becometh useless, either failing to discharge its office, or assaying it to no purpose; having often been slighted, it will be weary of chiding; or, if it be not wholly dumb, we shall be deaf to its reproof:† as those, who live by cataracts or downfalls of water, are, by continual noise, so deafened, as not to hear or mind it; so shall we in time grow senseless, not regarding the loudest peals and rattlings of our conscience.

The heart of a raw novice in impiety is somewhat tender and soft, so that remorse can pierce and sting it; his neck is yielding and sensible, so that the yoke

* Παρὰ τὸ σήμερον ἁμαρτηθὲν εἰς τἄλλα χεῖρον ἀνάγκη σοι τὰ πράγματα ἔχειν.—Epict. iv. 12.

† Falsis opinionibus tanto quisque inseritur, quanto magis in eis familiariusque volutatur.—*Aug. Ep.* 117.

* Μέγιστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν βοήθημα ἡ αἰδώς.—Gr. N. Or. 26.

——— nam quis
Peccandi finem posuit sibi, quando recepit
Ejectum semel attrita de fronte ruborem.
Juv. Sat. 18.

† Ψυχὴ ἅπαξ ἁμαρτίας γευσαμένη καὶ ἀναλγήτως διατεθεῖσα πολλὴν παρέχει τῷ νοσήματι τὴν προσθήκην, &c.—Chrys. tom. 5, Orat. 64.

[h] Ezek. ii. 4; iii. 7; Isa. xlviii. 4; Jer. v. 3; Prov. xxi. 29. [i] Phil. iii. 19.

of sin doth gall it:[i] but in stout proficients the heart becometh hard and stony, the neck stiff and brawny (*an iron sinew*,[k] as the prophet termeth it;) so that they do not feel or resent any thing; but are like those of whom St. Paul speaketh, οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες, who *being past feeling* all sorrow or smart, *have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.**[l]

When first we nibble at the bait, or enter into bad courses, our reason doth contest and remonstrate against it, faithfully representing to us the folly, the ugliness, the baseness, the manifold ill consequences of sinning; but that, by continuance, is muffled, so as not to discern; or muzzled, so as not to declare; yea, often is so debauched as to excuse, to avow, and maintain, yea, to applaud and extol our miscarriages.

For a time a man retaineth some courage, and a hope that he may repent; but progress in sin dispiriteth and casteth into despair, whether God be placable, whether himself be corrigible: an apprehension concerning the length of the way, or the difficulty of the work, discourageth; and despondency rendereth him heartless and careless to attempt it. There is no man that hath heard of God, who hath not at first some dread of offending him, and some dissatisfaction in transgressing his will; it appearing to his mind, not yet utterly blinded and depraved, a desperate thing to brave his irresistible power, an absurd thing to thwart his infallible wisdom, a detestable thing to abuse his immense goodness: but obstinacy in sin doth quash this conscientious awe; so that at length *God is not in all his thoughts, the fear of God is not before his eyes*;[m] the wrath of the Almighty seemeth a bugbear, the fiercest menances of religion sound but as rattles to him.

As for the gentle whispers and touches of divine grace, the monitory dispensations of Providence, the good advices and wholesome reproofs of friends, with the like means of reclaiming sinners; these, to persons *settled on their lees*,[n] or fixed in bad custom, are but as gusts of wind brushing an old oak, or as waves dashing on a rock, without at all shaking or stirring it.

Now when any person is come to this pass, it must be hugely difficult to reduce him; to retrieve a deflowered modesty, to quicken a jaded conscience, to supple a callous heart, to resettle a baffled reason, to rear a dejected courage, to recover a soul miserably benumbed and broken, to its former vigour and integrity, can be no easy matter.

The diseases of our soul, no less than those of our body, when once they are inveterate, they are become near incurable; the longer we forbear to apply due remedy, the more hard their cure will prove: if we let them proceed far, we must, ere we can be rid of them, undergo a course of physic very tedious and offensive to us; many a rough purge, many a sore phlebotomy, many an irksome sweat we must endure.* Yea, further,

5. We may consider, that by delaying to amend, to do it may become quite impossible; it may be so in the nature of the thing, it may be so by the will of God: the thing may become naturally impossible; for vice by custom may pass into nature, and prove so congenial, as if it were born with us; so that we shall propend to it, as a stone falleth down, or as a spark flieth upward: by soaking in voluptuousness we may be so transformed into brutes, by steeping in malice so converted into fiends, that we necessarily shall act like creatures of that kind, into which we are degenerated; and then in nowise, without a downright miracle, are we capable of being reformed.† *How long* (saith Solomon) *wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?*[o] We may be so often called on; and it is not easy to awaken us, when we are got into a spiritual slum-

* Quo quis pejus se habet, minus sentit.—*Sen. Ep.* 53.

[i] (Ezek. ii. 4; iii. 7; Neh. ix. 29; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13; Dan. v. 20.) [k] Isa. xlviii. 4.
[l] Ep. iv. 19. [m] Psal. x. 4; xxxvi. 1.
[n] Jer. xlviii. 11; Zeph. i. 12.

* —— frustra medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.
Ovid.

† Ῥᾴον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μὴ ἐνδοῦναι κακίᾳ, καὶ προσιοῦσαν διαρυγεῖν, ἢ προβαινοῦσαν ἀνακόψαι.—Gr. Naz. Or. 26.

Ἐπειδὰν εἰς φρενῖτιν ἐκπεσόντες λακτίζωσι καὶ δάκνωσι τοὺς βουλομένους ἀπαλλάξαι τῆς ἀῤῥωστίας αὐτοὺς, τότε νοσοῦσιν ἀνίατα.—Chrys. in Babyl. Orat. 2.

[o] Prov. vi. 9.

ber; but when we are *dead in trespasses and sins*,[p] so that all breath of holy affection is stopped, and no spiritual pulse from our heart doth appear; that all sense of duty is lost, all appetite to good doth fail, no strength or activity to move in a good course doth exert itself, that our good complexion is dissolved, and all our finer spirits are dissipated, that our mind is quite crazed, and all its powers are shattered or spoiled; when thus, I say, we are spiritually dead, how can we raise ourselves, what beneath omnipotency can effect it? As a stick, when once it is dry and stiff, you may break it, but you can never bend it into a straighter posture;* so doth the man become incorrigible, who is settled and stiffened in vice. The stain of habitual sin may sink in so deep, and so thoroughly tincture all our soul, that we may be like those people of whom the prophet saith, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*[q] Such an impossibility may arise from nature; one greater and more insuperable may come from God.

To an effectual repentance, the succour of divine grace is necessary; but that is arbitrarily dispensed: *the Spirit bloweth where it listeth;*[r] yet it listeth wisely, with regard both to the past behaviour and present capacities of men: so that to such who have abused it, and to such who will not treat it well, it shall not be imparted. And can we be well assured, can we reasonably hope, that after we by our presumptuous delays have put off God, and dallied with his grace; after that he long in vain *hath waited to be gracious;* after that he hath endured so many neglects, and so many repulses from us; after that we frequently have slighted his open invitations, and smothered his kindly motions in us; in short, after we so unworthily have misused his goodness and patience, that he further will vouchsafe his grace to us; when we have forfeited it, when we have rejected it, when we have spurned and driven it away, can we hope to recover it?[s]

There is a time, a season, a day, allotted to us; *our day*, it is termed, *a day of salvation, the season of our visitation, an acceptable time;*[t] wherein God freely doth exhibit grace, and presenteth his mercy to us: if we let this day slip, *the night cometh, when no man can work;* when *the things belonging to our peace will be hidden from our eyes;*[u] when (as the prophet expresseth it) we shall *grope for the wall like the blind, and stumble at noonday as in the night, and be in desolate places as dead men:*[v] after that day is spent, and that comfortable light is set, a dismal night of darkness, of cold, of disconsolateness, will succeed, when God, being *weary of bearing* with men, doth utterly desert them, and *delivereth them over to a reprobate mind;*[w] when subtracting his gracious direction and assistance, *he giveth them over to their own hearts' lusts, and to walk in their own counsels;*[x] when they are brought to complain, with those in the prophet, *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?*[y] when, like Pharaoh, they survive only as objects of God's justice, or occasions to glorify his power;[z] when, like Esau, they cannot find a place of repentance, *although they seek it carefully with tears;* when, as to the foolish loitering virgins, *the door* of mercy *is shut upon them;* when the *master of the house doth rise and shut the door*,[a] *&c.;* when that menace of divine wisdom cometh to be executed: *They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.*[b] And if, neglecting our season and present means, we once fall into this state, then is our case most deplorable: we are dead men irreversibly doomed, and only for a few moments reprieved from

* Frangas citius quam corrigas quæ in pravum induruerunt.—*Quintil.* i. 3.

[p] Eph. ii. 1; Apoc. iii. 1; 1 Tim. v. 6.
[q] Jer. xiii. 23.
[r] John iii. 8.
[s] Τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐννδρίσας, Heb. x. 29; Ἀδύνατον, Heb. vi. 4.
[t] Luke xix. 42, 44; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Heb. iii. 13; John ix. 4.
[u] Luke xix. 42.
[v] Isa. lix. 10.
[w] Jer. xv. 6; Mal. ii. 17; Isa. i. 14; vii. 13.
[x] Rom. i. 24; xxvi. 28; Psal. lxxxi. 12.
[y] Isa. lxiii. 17.
[z] Rom. ix. 17.
[a] Heb. xii. 17; Matt. xxv. 10; Luke xiii. 25
[b] Prov. i. 28, 29.

the stroke of final vengeance; *we are vessels of wrath fitted* (or made up) *for destruction*;[c] by a fatal blindness and obduration sealed up to ruin; we are like the *terra damnata*, *the earth* (in the apostle) *which drinking up the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bearing thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing*, and *whose end is to be burned*.[d] Wherefore, according to the advice of the prophet, *Seek ye the Lord when he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near*.[e]

It is true, that God is ever ready, upon our true conversion, to receive us into favour; that his arms are always open to embrace a sincere penitent; that he hath declared, *whenever a wicked man turneth from his wickedness, and doeth that which is right, he shall save his soul alive*;[f] that if *we do wash ourselves, make us clean, put away the evil of our doings, and cease to do evil*, then, *although our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool*;[g] that if *we rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, he is gracious and merciful, and will repent of the evil*;[h] that *God is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon him*; that whenever a prodigal son, with humble confession and hearty contrition for his sin, doth *arise and go to his father*;[i] he will embrace him tenderly, and entertain him kindly; that even a profane apostate, and a bloody oppressor (as Manasses*), a lewd strumpet (as Magdalene), a notable thief (as he upon the cross), a timorous renouncer (as St. Peter), a furious persecutor (as St. Paul), a stupid idolator (as all the heathen world, when the gospel came to them, was), the most heinous sinner that ever hath been, or can be imagined to be, if he be disposed to repent, is capable of mercy: those declarations and promises are infallibly true; those instances peremptorily do evince, that repentance is never superannuated; that if we can turn at all, we shall not turn too late; that *pœnitentia nunquam sera, modo seria*, is an irrefragable rule. Yet nevertheless delay is very unsafe; for what assurance can we have, that God hereafter will enable us to perform those conditions of bewailing our sins, and forsaking them? Have we not cause rather to fear that he will chastise our presumption by withholding his grace? For although God faileth not to yield competent aids to persons who have not *despised his goodness and longsuffering, that leadeth them to repentance*;[k] yet he that wilfully or wantonly loitereth away the time, and squandereth the means allowed him; who refuseth to come when God calleth, yea wooeth and and courteth him to repentance, how can he pretend to find such favour?

We might add, that supposing God in superabundance of mercy might be presumed never to withhold his grace; yet seeing his grace doth not work by irresistible compulsion; seeing the worse qualified we are, the more apt we shall be to cross and defeat its operation; seeing that we cannot hope that hereafter we shall be more fit than now to comply with it; yea, seeing we may be sure, that after our hearts are hardened by perseverance in sin, we shall be more indisposed thereto; we by delay of repentance do not only venture the forfeiture of divine grace, but the danger of abusing it, which heinously will aggravate our guilt, and hugely augment our punishment.

We should do well therefore most seriously to regard the apostle's admonition, *Exhort one another to-day, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*.[l] Now that we find ourselves invited to repent; now that we apprehend so much reason for it; now that we feel our hearts somewhat inclined thereto; now that we have time in our hands, and are not barred from hopes of mercy; now that it is not extremely difficult, or not absolutely impossible, let us in God's name lay hold on the occasion, let us speedily and earnestly set upon the work. Further yet,

6. We should consider, that we are mortal and frail, and thence any designs of future reformation may be clipt off, or intercepted by death; which is always

* *Vide* Chrys. ad Theod. ii.—Judas (saith he there) was capable of pardon.

[c] Rom. ix. 22—Κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν.
[d] Heb. vi. 7, 8.
[e] Isa. lv. 6.
[f] Ezek. xviii. 27
[g] Isa. i. 16, 18.
[h] Joel ii. 13.
[i] Psal. lxxxvi. 5.
[j] Luke xv. 18
[k] Rom. ii. 4
[l] Heb. iii. 13

creeping toward us, and may, for all we can tell, be very near at hand. You say you will repent to-morrow: but are you sure you will have a morrow to repent in?* Have you an hour in your hand, or one minute at your disposal? Have you a lease to show for any term of life? Can you claim or reckon upon the least portion of time without his leave, who bestoweth life, and dealeth out time, and ordereth all things as he pleaseth? Can you anywise descry the just *measure of your days*, or *the bounds of your appointed time*, without a special revelation from him, *in whose hands is your breath;* and *with whom* alone *the number of your months is* registered? *Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*,[m] saith the Wise Man; boast not of it, that is, do not pretend it to be at thy disposal, presume not upon any thing that may befall therein;† for whilst thou presumest thereon, may it not be said unto thee, as to the rich projector in the gospel, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee?*[n] Doth not, secluding hidden decrees, every man's life hang upon a thread very slender and frail? Is it not subject to many diseases lurking within, and to a thousand accidents flying about us? How many, that might have promised themselves as fair scope as we can, have been unexpectedly snapt away! how many have been cropt in the flower of their age and vigour of their strength! Doth not every day present experiments of sudden death? Do we not continually see that observation of the Preacher verified, *Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, so when it cometh suddenly upon them?*[o] Old men are ready to drop of themselves, and young men are easily brushed or shaken down;‡ the former visibly stand upon the brink of eternity, the latter walk upon a bottomless quag, into which unawares they may slump; who then can anywise be secure? We are all therefore highly concerned to use our life, while we have it; to catch the first opportunity lest all opportunity forsake us; to cut off our sinning, lest ourselves be cut off before it; and that the rather, because by lavishing, or misemploying our present time, we may lose the future, provoking God to bereave us of it; for as prolongation of time is a reward of piety; as to observance of the commandments it is promised, *Length of days, and long life, and peace, shall be added unto thee;*[p] so being immaturely snatched hence is the punishment awarded to impious practice: so it is threatened, that *evil men shall be cut off;* that *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;* that *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his wickedness:*[q] the very being unmindful of their duty is the cause why men are thus surprised; for, *If*, (saith God) *thou dost not watch, I shall come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know when I come upon thee.*[r] And, *If* (saith our Lord) *that servant doth say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming*, &c. *the lord of the servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him*,[s] &c.

If, then, it be certain, that we must render a strict account of all our doings here; if, by reason of our frail nature and slippery state, it be uncertain when we shall be summoned thereto; if our negligence may abridge and accelerate the term; is it not very reasonable to observe those advices of our Lord: *Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the Son of Man cometh. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like men that wait for your Lord:*[t] and to take the counsel of the Wise Man, *Make*

* Qui pœnitenti veniam spospondit, peccanti crastinum diem non promisit.—*Greg. in Evang. Hom.* ix.

† Οὐκ οἶδας τι τέξεται ἡ ἐπιοῦσα. μὴ ὑπαγγέλου τὰ μὴ σά.—Bas. M. Exh. ad Bapt.

‡ Τί γὰρ οἶδας, ἄνθρωπε ἁμαρτήσας, εἰ ἡμέρας ζήσεις ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ, ἵνα καὶ μετανοήσῃς, &c.

Ὅτι ἀδηλος ἡ ἔξοδός σου ἐκ τοῦ βίου ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ τελευτήσαντι μετάνοια οὐκ ἔσται, &c.—Const. Ap. ii. 12.

[m] Job xii. 10; xiv. 5; vii. 1; Psal xxxix. 4; xc. 12; Dan. v. 23; Prov. xxvii. 1.

[n] Luke xii 20 [o] Eccl ix 32

[p] Prov. iii. 2.

[q] Psal. xxxvii. 9; Psal. lv. 23; lxviii. 21

[r] Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15. [s] Luke xii. 45, 46.

[t] Matt. xxv. 13; xxiv. 42; Mark xiii. 33; Luke xii 15, 35, 36

no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day; for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance.[a]

These considerations plainly do show how very foolish, how extremely dangerous and destructive the procrastinating our reformation of life is: there are some others of good moment, which we shall reserve.

SERMON XLIX.

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM cxix. 60.—*I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

I PROCEED to the considerations which yet remain to be spoken to.

1. We may consider the causes of delay in this case (as in all cases of moment) to be bad, and unworthy of a man: what can they be but either stupidity, that we do not apprehend the importance of the affair; or improvidence, that we do not attend to the danger of persisting in sin; or negligence, that we do not mind our concernments; or sloth, that keepeth us from rousing and bestirring ourselves in pursuance of what appeareth expedient;* or faint-heartedness and cowardice, that we dare not attempt to cross our appetite or our fancy? All which dispositions are very base and shameful. It is the prerogative of human nature to be sagacious in estimating the worth, and provident in descrying the consequences of things; whereas other creatures, by impulse of sense, do only fix their regard on present appearances;† which peculiar excellency, by stupidity and improvidence we forfeit, degenerating into brutes; and negligence of that, which we discern mainly to concern us, is a quality somewhat beneath those, depressing us below beasts, which cannot be charged with such a fault; sloth is no less despicable, rendering a man fit for nothing; nor is there any thing commonly more reproacful than want of courage: so bad are the causes of delay.

2. And the effects are no less unhappy, being disappointment, damage, trouble, and sorrow. As expedition (catching advantages and opportunities, keeping the spirit up in its heat and vigour, making forcible impressions wherever it lighteth, driving on the current of success) doth subdue business, and achieve great exploits (as by practising his motto, *to defer nothing*,* Alexander did accomplish those mighty feats which make such a clatter in story; and Cæsar, more by the rapid quickness and forwardness of undertaking, than by the greatness of courage and skilfulness of conduct, did work out those enterprises, which purchased to his name so much glory and renown;) so delay and slowness do spoil all business, do keep off success at distance from us; thereby opportunity is lost, and advantages slip away; our courage doth flag, and our spirit languisheth; our endeavours strike faintly, and are easily repelled; whence disappointment necessarily doth spring, attended with vexation.†

3. Again, we may consider, that to set upon our duty is a great step toward the performance of it: if we can resolve well, and a little push forward, we are in a fair way to despatch; *to begin*, they say, *is to have half done*;‡ to set out, is a good part of the journey; to rise betimes, is often harder than to do all the day's work: entering the town, is almost the same with taking it; it is so in all business, it is chiefly so in moral practice: for if we can find in our hearts to take our leave of sin, if we can disengage ourselves from the witcheries of present allurement, if we can but get over the threshold of virtuous conversa-

* Ἀργίας πρόφασις ἡ ἀναβολή.—Simpl.

† Animal hoc providum, sagax, &c.—*Cic. de Leg.* i. *Cic. de Offic.* i.

[a] Ecclus. v. 7.

* Μηδὲν ἀναβαλλόμενος.—Successus urgere suos, instare, &c.—*Luc.* i.

† Plerisque in rebus tarditas et procrastinatio odiosa est.—*Cic. Philip.* 6.

Αἰεὶ δ' ἀρβαλιεργὸς ἀνὴρ ἄτῃσι παλαίει.—Hes.

Dum deliberamus quando incipiendum est, incipere jam serum est.—*Quint.* xii. 7.

‡ Dimidium facti qui cœpit habet.—*Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

Μόνον ἀρχὴν ἐπιθῖς τῷ πράγματι, &c.—Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. p. 68.

Τὸ δυσχερὲς καὶ δυσκατόρθωτον τοῦτο ἐστι, τὸ δυνηθῆναι ἐπιβῆναι τῆς εἰσόδου καὶ τῶν προθύρων ἀψάσθαι τῆς μετανοίας.—Ib. p. 79.

tion, we shall find the rest beyond expectation smooth and expedite; we shall discover such beauty in virtue, we shall taste so much sweetness in obedience, as greatly will encourage us to proceed therein.*

4. Again, we may consider, that our time itself is a gift, or a talent committed to us, for the improvement whereof we are responsible no less than for our wealth, our power, our credit, our parts, and other such advantages, wherewith for the serving of God, and furthering our own salvation, we are intrusted; *To redeem the time*[a] is a precept, and of all precepts the most necessary to be observed; for that without redeeming (that is, embracing and well employing) time we can do nothing well; no good action can be performed, no good reward can be procured by us: well may we be advised to take our best care in husbanding it, seeing justly of all things it may be reckoned most precious;† its price being inestimable, and its loss irreparable; for all the world cannot purchase one moment of it more than is allowed us; neither can it, when once gone, by any means be recovered: so much indeed as we save thereof, so much we preserve of ourselves; and so far as we lose it, so far in effect we slay ourselves, or deprive ourselves of life: yea, by misspending it, we do worse than so; for a dead sleep, or a cessation from being, is not so bad as doing ill; all that while we live backward, or decline toward a state much worse than annihilation itself. Further,

5. Consider, that of all time the present is ever the best for the purpose of amending our life. It is the only sure time, that which we have in our hands, and may call our own;‡ whereas the past time is irrevocably gone from us; and the future may never come to us: it is absolutely (reckoning from our becoming sensible of things, and accountable for our actions), the best, as to our capacity of improving it;

Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit. *Virg. Georg.* iii.

Our best days do first pass away, was truly said; the nearer to its source our life is, the purer it is from stain, the freer from clogs, the more susceptive of good impressions, the more vivid and brisk in its activity; the further we go on, especially in a bad course, the nearer, we verge to the dregs of our life; the more dry, the more stiff, the more sluggish we grow: delay therefore doth ever steal away the flour of our age, leaving us the bran and refuse thereof. Again,

6. If at any time we do reflect upon the time that hath already slipped away unprofitably from us, it will seem more than enough, and (if we consider well) it will be grievous to us to lose more; the morrow will seem too late to commence a good life;* ἀρκετὸς ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος, *The time past of our life* (saith St. Peter) *may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*,[b] or to have continued in ill courses: more indeed it might than suffice; it should be abundantly too much to have embezzled so large a portion of our precious and irreparable time; after we have slept in neglect of our duty, ὥρα ἤδη ἐγερθῆναι, *it is* (as St. Paul saith) *now high time to awake*[c] unto a vigilant observance thereof: this we shall the rather do, if we consider, that,

7. For ill living now we shall come hereafter to be sorry, if not with a wholesome contrition, yet with a painful regret; we shall certainly one day repent, if not of our sin, yet of our sinning; if not so as to correct for the future, yet so as to condemn ourselves for what is past: the consideration of our having sacrilegiously robbed our Maker of the time due to his service; of our having injuriously defrauded our souls of the opportunities granted to secure their welfare; of our having profusely cast away our most precious hours of life upon vanity and folly, will sometime twitch us sorely. There is no man who doth not with a sorrowful eye review an ill-past life; who would not gladly recall his mis-spent time; *O mihi præteritos!* O that God would re-

* Honestas, quæ principio anxia habetur, ubi contigerit, voluptati luxuriæque habetur.—*Vict. in Sep. Sev.*

† Πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα.

‡ Omnia quæ ventura sunt in incerto jacent, protinus vive.—*Sen. de Vit. brev.* 9.

* Sera nimis vita est crastina, vive hodie.—*Mart.* i. 16.

[a] Eph. v. 16; Col. iv. 5.

[b] 1 Pet. iv. 3.

[c] Rom. xiii. 11.

store my past years to me, is every such man's prayer, although it never was heard, never could be granted unto any. And what is more inconsistent with wisdom than to engage ourselves upon making such ineffectual and fruitless wishes? what is more disagreeable to reason, than to do that, for which we must be forced to confess and call ourselves fools? What man of sense, for a flash of transitory pleasure, for a puff of vain repute, for a few scraps of dirty pelf, would plunge himself into such a gulf of anguish?

8. On the contrary, if, laying hold on occasion, we set ourselves to do well, reflection thereon will yield great satisfaction and pleasure to us; we shall be glad that we have done, and that our task is over; we shall *enjoy our former life:* our time which is so past will not yet be lost unto us; but rather it will be most securely ours, laid up beyond the reach of danger, in the repository of a good conscience.*

9. Again, all our time of continuance in sin we do *treasure up wrath*,[d] or accumulate guilt; and the larger our guilt is, the sorer must be our repentance;† the more bitter the sorrow, the more low the humbling, the more earnest the deprecation requisite to obtain pardon; the broader and deeper the stain is, the more washing is needful to get it out; if we sin much and long, we must grieve answerably, or we shall be no fit objects of mercy.

10. And whenever the sin is pardoned, yet indelible marks and monuments thereof will abide. We shall eternally be obliged to cry *peccavi:* although the punishment may be remitted, the desert of it cannot be removed; a scar from it will stick in our flesh, which ever will deform us; a tang of it will stay in our memory, which always will be disgustful; we shall never reflect on our miscarriages without some confusion and horror;* incessantly we shall be liable to that question of St. Paul, *What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?*[e] If, therefore, we could reasonably presume, yea, if we could certainly foresee, that we should hereafter in time repent, yet it were unadvisable to persist in sin, seeing it being once committed, can never be reversed, never expunged from the registers of time, never dashed out from the tables of our mind and memory; but will perpetually rest as matter of doleful consideration, and of tragical story to us. *Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and for your abominations.*[f]

11. Again, so much time as we spend in disobedience, so much of reward we do forfeit; for commensurate to our works shall our rewards be; the fewer our good works are in the course of our present life, the smaller shall be the measures of joy, of glory, of felicity, dispensed to us hereafter; the later consequently we repent, the less we shall be happy: *One star* (saith the apostle) *differeth from another in glory;*[g] and of all stars, those in the celestial sphere will shine brightest, who did soon rise here, and continued long, by the lustre of their good works, to glorify their heavenly Father; for *the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*[h] While, therefore, we let our interest lie dead by lingering, or run behind by sinful practice, we are very bad husbands for our soul; our spiritual estate doth thereby hugely

* Ille sapit quisquis, Posthume, vixit heri.—*Mart.* v. 60.

Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus; hoc est
Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui.—*Mart.* x. 23.

† Quam magna deliquimus, tam granditer defleamus, &c.—*Cypr. de Laps. Or.* 5.

[d] Rom. ii. 5.

* Parva potest demi, culpa perennis erit.—*Ovid.*

Ἡ συγχώρησις ἐγίνετο τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῶν συγκεχωρημένων ἁμαρτημάτων οὐκ ἠφανίζετο παρὰ τῷ Παύλῳ.—Chrys. tom. viii. p. 97.

[e] Rom. vi. 21.
[f] Ezek. xvi. 61, 63; xxxvi. 31; xx. 43.
[g] 1 Cor. xv. 41. [h] Prov. iv. 18.

suffer; every minute contracteth a damage, that runneth through millions of ages, and which therefore will amount to an immense sum: and who for all the pleasures here would forego one degree of blissful joy hereafter? who for all earthly splendours would exchange one spark of celestial glory? who for all the treasures below would let slip one gem out of his heavenly crown?

12. Further, let us consider that whatever our age, whatever our condition or case be, the advice not to procrastinate our obedience is very suitable and useful.

Art thou young? then it is most proper to enter upon living well.* For when we set out, we should be put in a right way; when we begin to be men, we should begin to use our reason well; life and virtue should be of the same standing. What is more ugly than a child, that hath learnt little, having learnt to do ill? than naughtiness springing up in that state of innocence? The foundation of a good life is to be laid in that age, upon which the rest of our life is built; for this is the manner of our proceeding; the present always dependeth upon what is past; our practice is guided by notions that we had sucked in, is swayed by inclinations that we got before; whence usually our first judgments of things, and our first propensions, do stretch their influence upon the whole future life. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,*[1] saith the Wise Man.

That age, as it is most liable to be corrupted by vice, so it is most capable of being imbued with virtue; then nature is soft and pliable, so as easily to be moulded into any shape, ready to admit any stamp impressed thereon;† then the mind is a pure table, in which good principles may be fairly engraven without rasing out any former ill prejudices; then the heart being a soil free of weeds, the seeds of goodness being cast therein will undisturbedly grow and thrive; then the complexion being tender, will easily be set into a right posture; our soul is then a vessel empty and sweet; good liquor therefore may be instilled, which will both fit it, and season it with a durable tincture; the extreme curiosity and huge credulity of that age, as they greedily will swallow any, so will they admit good instruction. If we do then imbibe false conceptions, or have bad impressions made on our minds, it will be hard afterwards to expel, or to correct them.* Passion is then very fluid and moveable, but, not being impetuously determined any way, may easily be derived into the right channel. Then the quickness of our wit, the briskness of our fancy, the freshness of our memory, the vigour of our affections, the lusty and active mettle of our spirits, being applied to virtuous studies and endeavours, will produce most noble fruits; the beauty of which will adorn us, the sweetness will please us, so as to leave on our minds a perpetual relish and satisfaction in goodness.† Then, being less encumbered with the cares, less entangled in the perplexities, less exposed to the temptations of the world and secular affairs, we can more easily set forth, we may proceed more expeditely in good courses. Then, being void of that stinging remorse, which doth adhere to reflections upon past follies and mispent time, with more courage and alacrity we may prosecute good undertakings; then, beginning so soon to embrace virtue, we shall have advantage with more leisure and more ease to polish and perfect it through our ensuing course of life; setting out so early, in the very morning of our age, without much straining, marching on softly and fairly, we may go through our journey to happiness.

Our actions then are the first-fruits of our life, which therefore are fit and due sacrifices to our Maker; which if we do withdraw, we shall have nothing left so worthy or acceptable to present unto him. Will it be seemly to offer him the dregs and refuse of our age? Shall we not be

* Sub pædagogo cœperis licet, serum est.—*Mart.* viii. 44.

† Natura tenacissimi sumus eorum, quæ rudibus annis percipimus, &c.—*Quint.* i. 1.

Difficulter eraditur quod rudes animi perbiberunt.—*Hier. ad Lætam.*

[1] Prov. xxii. 6.

* Ut corpora ad quosdam membrorum flexus formari nisi tenera non possunt, sic animos ad pleraque duriores robur ipsum facit.—*Quint.* i. 1.

Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
Testa diu. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

† Ἡδέι γὰρ ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἡ νεότης, ὅτι εὐρίπιστον, ὅτι εὐεξαπάτητον, ὅτι εὐόλισθον, καί σφοδροτέρου δεῖ χαλινοῦ.—Chrys. ἀνέρ. α΄.

ashamed to bring a crazy temper of body and soul, dry bones, and decayed senses, a dull fancy, a treacherous memory, a sluggish spirit before him? Shall we then, when we are fit for little, begin to undertake his service? With our decrepit limbs and wasted strength, shall we set ourselves to *run the ways of his commandments?*

As it is uncomfortable to think of being parsimonious, when our stock is almost gone; so it is to become thrifty of our life when it comes near the bottom. *Δεινὴ ἐνὶ πυθμενὶ φειδώ.*

If we keep innocency, spend our youth well, it will yield unexpressible comfort to us; it will save us much sorrow, it will prevent many inconveniences to us: if we have spent it ill, it will yield us great displeasure, it will cost us much pains; we shall be forced sadly to bewail our folly and vanity therein;[i] it will be bitter to see that we must unlive our former life, and undo all we have done; that we must renounce the principles we have avowed, we must root out the habits we have planted, we must forsake the paths which we have beaten and so long trod in, if ever we will be happy; it will be grievous to us, when we come with penitential regret to deprecate, *Lord, remember not the sins of my youth;* we shall feel sore pain, when *our bones are full of the sins of our youth;* and we come to *possess the iniquities thereof.*[k]

It is therefore *good* (as the prophet saith) *that a man bear the yoke in his youth,*[l] when his neck is tender;* it is excellent advice which the Preacher giveth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*[m]

Aristotle saith, that young men are not *fit hearers of moral doctrine*, because, saith he, *they are unexperienced in affairs of life;* and *because they are apt to follow their passions, which indispose to hear with fruit or profit.*† But his conclusion is false, and his reasons may be well turned against him; for because young men want experience, therefore is there no bad prejudice, no contrary habit to obstruct their embracing sound doctrine; because their passions are vehement and strong, therefore being rightly ordered, and set upon good objects, they with great force will carry them to virtuous practice: that indeed is the best time to regulate and tame passions; as horses must be broken when they are colts; dogs must be made when they are whelps, else they will never be brought to any thing. The poet therefore advised better than the philosopher;

—— nunc adbibe puro
Pectore verba puer, nunc te melioribus offer:
Hor. Ep. i. 2.

and St. Paul plainly doth confute him, when he biddeth parents to *educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:*[n] when he chargeth Titus, that he *exhort young men to be sober-minded;*[o] when he commendeth Timothy, for that he had *ἀπο βρέφους, from his infancy, known the holy scriptures;* so doth the Psalmist, when he saith, *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to thy word.*[p] And Solomon, when he declareth that his moral precepts did serve *to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion;*[q] when he biddeth us to *train up a child in the way he should go*, St. Peter doth intimate the same when he biddeth us *as new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word;* and our Saviour, when he said, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God;*[r] that is, the more simplicity and innocence a man is endued with, the more apt he is to embrace and comply with the evangelical doctrine. Aristotle therefore was out, when he would exclude young men from the schools of virtue. It is observable that he contradicteth himself; for

* Fingit equum tenera docilem cervice magister
Ire viam, quam monstrat eques. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

† Τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκεῖος ἀκροατὴς ὁ νέος· ἄπειρος γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων· ἔτι τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀκολουθητικὸς ὧν ματαίως ἀκούσεται καὶ ἀνωφελῶς.—Eth. i. 3.

[i] Psal. xxxvii. 38.
[k] Psal. xxv. 7; Job xx. 11; xiii. 26.
[l] Lam. iii. 27.
[m] Eccl. xii. 1.
[n] Eph. vi. 4.
[o] Tit. ii. 6.
[p] 2 Tim. ii. 22; iii. 15; Psal. cxix. 9.
[q] Prov. i. 4.
[r] Prov. xxii. 6, 15; 1 Pet. ii. 2; Luke xviii. 16.

Οὐ μικρὸν διαφέρει τὸ οὕτως ἢ οὕτως, εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων ἐθίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ πάμπολυ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ πᾶν. *It is* (saith he) *of no small concernment to be from youth accustomed thus or thus: yea, it is very much, or rather all.*[s] And how shall a young man be accustomed to do well, if he be not allowed to learn what is to be done?

Again: Are we old? it is then high time to begin; we have then less time to spare from our most important buisness; we stand then in most imminent danger, upon the edge of perdition, and should therefore be nimble to skip out thence; our forces being diminished, our quickness and industry should be increased; the later we set out, the more speed it behoveth us to make. If we stay, we shall grow continually more indisposed and unfit to amend; it will be too late, when utter decrepitness and dotage have seized upon us, and our body doth survive our soul.* When so much of our time, of our parts, of our strength, are fled, we should husband the rest to best advantage, and make the best satisfaction we can unto God, and unto our souls, with the remainder.

This age hath some peculiar advantages, which we should embrace: the froth of humours is then boiled out, the fervours of lust are slaked, passions are allayed, appetites are flatted; so that then inclinations to sin are not so violent, nor doth the enjoyment thereof so much gratify.†

Long experience then hath discovered the vanity of all worldly things, and the mischief of ill courses; so that we can then hardly admire any thing, or be fond of enjoying what we have found unprofitable or hurtful.

Age is excused from compliance with the fashions, and thence much exempted from temptations of the world; so that it may be good without obstacle or opposition.

It is proper thereto to be grave and serious, and, consequently, to be virtuous; for gravity without virtue, and seriousness about vain things, are ridiculous.

Nothing doth so adorn this age as goodness, nothing doth so disgrace it as wickedness: *The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness;*[t] but it is a mark of infamy, if it be observed proceeding in a course of iniquity; it signifieth that experience hath not improved it; it argueth incorrigible folly, or rather incurable madness therein.

There is indeed no care, no employment proper for old men, but to prepare for their dissolution; to be bidding adieu to the world, with its vain pomps and mischievous pleasures; to be packing up their goods, to be casting their accounts, to be fitting themselves to abide in that state into which they are tumbling; to appear at that bar before which suddenly nature will set them. As a ship, which hath long been tossed and weatherbeaten, which is shattered in its timber, and hath lost much of its rigging, should do nothing in that case but work toward the port, there to find its safety and ease; so should a man, who, having passed many storms and agitations of the world, is grievously battered and torn with age, strive only to die well, to get safe into the harbour of eternal rest.*

In fine, Epicurus himself said well, that *no man is either immature or overripe in regard to his soul's health;*† we can never set upon it too soon, we should never think it too late to begin: to live well is always the best thing we can do, and therefore we should at any time endeavour it; there are common reasons for all ages, there are special reasons for each age, which most strongly and most clearly do urge it; it is most seasonable for young men, it is most necessary for old men, it is most advisable for all men.‡

Again; be our condition what it will,

* Quod facere solent qui serius exeunt—calcar addamus.—*Sen. Ep.* 61, 76, 19.

Apoc. iii. 2.—Στήριξον τὰ λοιπὰ, ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν.

† —— non omnia grandior ætas
Quæ fugiamus habet —— *Ovid.*

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ νεότης πελάγει προσέοικε μαινομένῳ, κυμάτων ἀγρίων, καὶ πνευμάτων γέμοντι πονηρῶν· ἡ δὲ πολιὰ ὥσπερ εἰς λιμένα ἀκύμαντον τὰς τῶν γεγηρακότων ὁρμίζει ψυχὰς, παρέχουσα τῇ παρὰ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐντρυφᾶν ἀσφαλείᾳ.—Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. 38.

[s] Eth. ii. 2.

* In freto viximus moriamur in portu.—*Sen. Ep.* 19.

† Οὔτ' ἄωρος οὐδείς ἐστιν, οὔτε πάρωρος πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν ὑγιαῖνον.—Epict. ad Monœc.

‡ Quare juventus, imo omnis ætas (neque enim rectæ voluntati serum est tempus ullum) totis mentibus huc tendamus, in hoc elaboremus; forsan et consummare contingat.—*Quint.* xii. 1.

[t] Prov. xvi. 31.

this advice is reasonable: Are we in health? we owe God thanks for that excellent gift; and the best gratitude we can express is the improving it for his service and our own good: we should not lose the advantage of a season so fit for our obedience and repentance; while the forces of our body and mind are entire, while we are not discomposed by pain or faintness, we should strive to despatch this needful work, for which infirmity may disable us.

Are we sick? it is then high time to consider our frailty, and the best we can to obviate the worst consequences thereof: it is then very fit, when we do feel the sad effects of sin, to endeavour the prevention of worse mischiefs that may follow; it is seasonable, when we lie under God's correcting hand, to submit unto him, to deprecate his wrath, to seek reconciliation with him by all kinds of obedience suitable to that state; with serious resolutions to amend hereafter, if it shall please God to restore us; it is most advisable, when we are in the borders of death, to provide for that state which lieth just beyond it.

Are we rich and prosperous? it is expedient then presently to amend, lest our wealth do soon corrupt us with pride, with luxury, with sloth, with stupidity; lest our prosperity become an inevitable snare, an irrecoverable bane unto us.[u]

Are we poor or afflicted? it is then also needful to repent quickly, that we may have a comfortable support for our soul, and a certain succour in our distress; that we may get treasure to supply our want, a joy to drown our sorrow, a buoy to keep our hearts from sinking into desperation and disconsolatenes. This condition is a medicine, which God administereth for our soul's health; if it do not work presently, so as to do us good, it will prove both grievous and hurtful to us.

13. Lastly, we may consider, that, abating all the rueful consequences of abiding in sin, abstracting from the desperate hazards it exposeth us to in regard to the future life, it is most reasonable to abandon it, betaking ourselves to a virtuous course of practice. For virtue in itself is far more eligible than vice; to keep God's commandments hath much greater convenience than to break them; the life of a good man, in all considerable respects, is highly to be preferred above the life of a bad man: for what is virtue, but a way of living that advanceth our nature into a similitude with God's most excellent and happy nature;* that promoteth our true benefit and interest; that procureth and preserveth health, ease, safety, liberty, peace, comfortable subsistence, fair repute, tranquillity of mind, all kinds of convenience to us? To what ends did our most benign and most wise Maker design and suit his law, but to the furthering our good, and securing us from mischief, as not only himself hath declared, but reason showeth, and experience doth attest?[v] What is vice, but a sort of practice which debaseth and disparageth us, which plungeth us into grievous evils, which bringeth distemper of body and soul, distress of fortune, danger, trouble, reproach, regret, and numberless inconveniences upon us; which, for no other reason than because it so hurteth and grieveth us, was by our loving Creator interdicted to us? Virtue is most noble and worthy, most lovely, most profitable, most pleasant, most creditable; vice is most sordid and base, ugly, hurtful, bitter, disgraceful in itself, and in its consequences. If we compare them together, we shall find that virtue doth always preserve our health, but vice commonly doth impair it; that virtue improveth our estate, vice wasteth it; that virtue adorneth our reputation, vice blemisheth it; that virtue strengtheneth our parts, vice weakeneth them; that virtue maintaineth our freedom, vice enslaveth us; that virtue keepeth our mind in order and peace, vice discomposeth and disquieteth it; virtue breedeth satisfaction and joy, vice spawneth displeasure and anguish of conscience: to enter therefore into a virtuous course of life, what is it but to embrace happiness? to continue in vicious practice, what is it but to stick in misery?

By entering into good life, we enter into the favour and friendship of God, engaging his infinite power and wisdom for our protection, our succour, our direc-

[u] Prov. i. 32.

* Est virtus nihil aliud quam in se perfecta, et ad summum perducta natura.—*Cic. de Leg.* 1.

[v] Deut. x. 13; Mic. vi. 8; Neh. ix. 13; Rom. vii. 12; Psal. xix. 9; cxix. 107.

tion, and guidance; enjoying the sweet efluxes of his mercy and bounty; we therewith become friends to the holy angels and blessed saints; to all good men, being united in a holy and happy consortship of judgment, of charity, of hope, of devotion with them: we become friends to all the world, which we oblige by good wishes, and good deeds, and by the influence of good example: we become friends to ourselves, whom we thereby enrich and adorn with the best goods; whom we gratify and please with the choicest delights: but, persisting in sin, we continue to affront, wrong, and displease our Maker, to be disloyal toward our sovereign Lord, to be ingrateful toward our chief benefactor, to disoblige the best friend we have, to provoke a most just and severe judge, to cope with omnipotency, to contradict infallibility, to enrage the greatest patience, to abuse immense goodness: we thereby become enemies to all the world; to God, whom we injure and dishonour; to the friends of God, whom we desert and oppose; to the creatures, which we abuse to our pride, lust, and vanity; to our neighbours, whom we corrupt or seduce; to ourselves, whom we bereave of the best goods, and betray to the worst evils.

Beginning to live soberly, we begin to live like men, following the conduct of reason; beginning to live in charity, we commence the life of angels, enjoying in ourselves most sweet content, and procuring great benefit to others; but going on in sinful voluptuousness, we proceed to live like beasts, wholly guided by sense, and swayed by appetite; being pertinacious in malice, we continue to be like fiends, working torment in ourselves, and mischief to our neighbours.

Embracing virtue, we become wise and sober men, worthy and honourable, beneficial and useful to the world; but continuing in vice, we continue to be foolish and vain, to be vile and despicable, to be worthless and useless.

By our delay to amend, what do we gain? what, but a little flashy and transient pleasure, instead of a solid and durable peace; but a little counterfeit profit, instead of real wealth; but a little smoke of deceitful opinion, instead of unquestionably sound honour; shadows of imaginary goods, instead of those which are most substantial and true, a good mind, the love of God, the assured welfare of our souls. But this field of discourse is too spacious; I shall only therefore for conclusion say, that speedily applying ourselves to obedience, and breaking off our sins by repentance, is in effect nothing else but, from a present hell in trouble, and the danger of a final hell in torment, to be translated into a double heaven; one of joyful tranquillity here, another of blissful rest hereafter; unto the which Almighty God in his mercy bring us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. *Amen.*

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.[w] Amen.

SERMON L.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. ix. 10. — *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.*

IN St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, among divers excellent rules of life, prescribed by that great master, this is one, Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, *Be not slothful in business*,[a] or to business; and in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, among other principal virtues or worthy accomplishments, for *abounding* wherein the apostle commendeth those Christians, he ranketh *all diligence*,[b] or industry exercised in all affairs and duties incumbent on them: this is that virtue, the practice whereof in this moral precept or advice the royal Preacher doth recommend unto us; being indeed an eminent virtue, of very general use, and powerful influence upon the management of all our affairs, or in the conduct of our whole life.

Industry, I say, in general, touching all matters incident, which *our hand findeth to do*, that is, which dispensation of Providence doth offer, or which choice of

[w] 1 Thess. v. 23.
[a] Rom. xii. 11.
[b] Πᾶσα σπουδή.—2 Cor. viii. 7.

reason embraceth, for employing our active powers of soul and body, the Wise Man doth recommend; and to pressing the observance of his advice (waving all curious remarks, either critical or logical upon the words) I shall presently apply my discourse, proposing divers considerations apt to excite us thereto; only first, let me briefly describe it, for our better apprehension of its true notion and nature.

By industry we understand a serious and steady application of mind, joined with a vigorous exercise of our active faculties, in prosecution of any reasonable, honest, useful design, in order to the accomplishment or attainment of some considerable good; as, for instance, a merchant is industrious who continueth intent and active in driving on his trade for acquiring wealth; a soldier is industrious who is watchful for occasion, and earnest in action, toward obtaining the victory; and a scholar is industrious who doth assiduously bend his mind to study for getting knowledge.

Industry doth not consist merely in action; for that is incessant in all persons, our mind being a restless thing, never abiding in a total cessation from thought or from design;* being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation somewhither. But the direction of our mind to some good end, without roving, or flinching, in a straight and steady course, drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry; the which therefore usually is attended with labour and pain; for our mind (which naturally doth affect variety and liberty, being apt to loathe familiar objects, and to be weary of any constraint) is not easily kept in a constant attention to the same thing; and the spirits employed in thought are prone to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix them: and the corporeal instruments of action being strained to a high pitch, or detained in a tone, will soon feel a lassitude somewhat offensive to nature; whence labour or pain is commonly reckoned an ingredient of industry; and laboriousness is a name signifying it; upon which account this virtue, as involving labour, deserveth a peculiar commendation; it being then most laudable to follow the dictates of reason, when so doing is attended with difficulty and trouble.

Such in general I conceive to be the nature of industry; to the practice whereof the following considerations may induce.

1. We may consider that industry doth befit the constitution and frame of our nature; all the faculties of our soul and organs of our body being adapted in a congruity and tendency thereto: our hands are suited for work, our feet for travel, our senses to watch for occasion of pursuing good and eschewing evil, our reason to plod and contrive ways of employing the other parts and powers; all these, I say, are formed for action; and that not in a loose and gadding way, or in a slack and remiss degree, but, in regard to determinate ends, with vigour requisite to attain them; and especially our appetites do prompt to industry, as inclining to things not obtainable without it; according to that aphorism of the Wise Man, *Ἐπιθυμίαι ὀκνηρὸν ἀποκτείνουσιν*—*The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour*;[c] that is, he is apt to desire things which he cannot attain without pains; and, not enduring them, he for want thereof doth feel a deadly smart and anguish: wherefore in not being industrious we defeat the intent of our Maker; we pervert his work and gifts; we forfeit the use and benefit of our faculties; we are bad husbands of nature's stock.

2. In consequence hereto industry doth preserve and perfect our nature, keeping it in good tune and temper, improving and advancing it toward its best state. The labour of our mind in attentive meditation and study doth render it capable and patient of thinking upon any object or occasion, doth polish and refine it by use, doth enlarge it by accession of habits, doth quicken and rouse our spirits, dilating and diffusing them into their proper channels. The very labour of our body doth keep the organs of action sound and clean, discussing fogs and su-

* Ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ φύσιν ἔχουσα τοῦ κινεῖσθαι διαπαντὸς, οὐκ ἀνέχεται ἡρεμεῖν, ἔμπρακτον τὸ ζῶον τοῦτο ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς, &c.—Chrys. in Act. Or. 35.

[c] Prov. xxi. 25; xiii. 4.

perfluous humours, opening passages, distributing nourishment, exciting vital heat: barring the use of it, no good constitution of soul or body can subsist; but a foul rust, a dull numbness, a resty listlessness, a heavy unwieldiness, must seize on us;* our spirits will be stifled and choked, our hearts will grow faint and languid, our parts will flag and decay; the vigour of our mind and the health of our body will be much impaired.

It is with us as with other things in nature,† which by motion are preserved in their native purity and perfection, in their sweetness, in their lustre, rest corrupting, debasing, and defiling them. If the water runneth, it holdeth clear, sweet, and fresh; but stagnation turneth it into a noisome puddle: if the air be fanned by winds, it is pure and wholesome; but from being shut up, it groweth thick and putrid: if metals be employed, they abide smooth and splendid; but lay them up, and they soon contract rust: if the earth be belaboured with culture, it yieldeth corn; but, lying neglected, it will be overgrown with brakes and thistles;‡ and the better its soil is, the ranker weeds it will produce: all nature is upheld in its being, order, and state, by constant agitation; every creature is incessantly employed in action conformable to its designed end and use; in like manner the preservation and improvement of our faculties depends on their constant exercise.

3. As we naturally were composed, so by divine appointment we were originally designed for industry; God did not intend that man should live idly, even in his best state, or should enjoy happiness without taking pains; but did provide work enough even in paradise itself: for *the Lord God* (saith the text) *took man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it;*[d] so that had we continued happy, we must have been ever busy, by our industry sustaining our life, and securing our pleasure; otherwise weeds might have overgrown paradise, and that of Solomon might have been applicable to Adam: *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding: and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof.*[e]

4. By our transgression and fall the necessity of industry (together with a difficulty of obtaining good, and avoiding evil) was increased to us; being ordained both as a just punishment for our offences, and as an expedient remedy of our needs: for thereupon *the ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles to us:*[f] and it was our doom pronounced by God's own mouth, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground:*[g] so that now labour is fatally natural to us; now *man* (as Job saith) *is born to labour, as the sparks fly upward* (or, *as the vulture's chickens soar aloft*,[h] according to the Greek interpreters.*)

5. Accordingly, our condition and circumstances in the world are so ordered as to require industry; so that without it we cannot support our life in any comfort or convenience; whence St. Paul's charge upon the Thessalonians, that *if any one would not work, neither should he eat*,[i] is in a manner a general law imposed on mankind by the exigency of our state, according to that of Solomon: *The idle soul shall suffer hunger;* and, *The sluggard who will not plough by reason of the cold, shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.*[j]

Of all our many necessities, none can be supplied without pains, wherein all men are obliged to bear a share; every man is to work for his food, for his apparel, for all his accommodations, either immediately and directly, or by commutation and equivalence; for the gentleman himself cannot (at least worthily

* Πάντα γὰρ ἡ ἀργία βλάπτει καὶ τὰ μέλη σώματος αὐτά, &c. Chrys. in Act. Orat. 35.

Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τοιούτου τὸ σῶμα ἔκλυτον, &c. Ibid.

† Ποῖος ἵππος χρήσιμος, ὁ τρυφῶν, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος; ποία ναῦς, ἡ πλέουσα, ἢ ἡ ἀργοῦσα; ποῖον ὕδωρ, τὸ τρέχον, ἢ τὸ ἑστώς; ποῖος σίδηρος, ὁ κείμενος, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος, &c.—Ib.

‡ Neglectus urenda filix innascitur agris.—*Hor. Ser.* i. 3.——Plut. περὶ Παίδων Ἀγωγῆς, p. 3, edit. Steph.

[d] Gen. ii. 15.

* Ἀλλ' ἄνθρωπος γεννᾶται κόπῳ· νεοσσοὶ δὲ γυπὸς ὑψηλὰ πέτυνται. LXX. Interp. *Now* great travail (as the Son of Sirach saith) is created for every man (ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c. Ecclus. xl. 1;) and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, &c.

[e] Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

[f] Gen. iii. 17.

[g] Gen. iii. 19.

[h] Job v. 7.

[i] 2 Thess. iii. 10.

[j] Prov. xix. 15; xx. 4.

and inculpably) obtain them otherwise than by redeeming them from the ploughman and the artificer, by compensation of other cares and pains conducible to public good.

The wise poet did observe well when he said,

—— Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit.
Virgil. Georg. i.

And St. Chrysostom doth propose the same observation, that God, to whet our mind,* and keep us from moping, would not that we should easily come by the fruits of the earth, without employing much art and many pains; in order thereto there must be skill used in observing seasons, and preparing the ground; there must be labour spent in manuring, in delving, and ploughing; in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it; there must be pains taken in reaping, in gathering, in laying up, in thrashing and dressing the fruit ere we can enjoy it; so much industry is needful to get bread: and if we list to fare more daintily, we must either hunt for it, using craft and toil to catch it out of the woods, the water, the air; or we must carefully wait on those creatures, of which we would serve ourselves, feeding them that they may feed us; such industry is required to prevent mankind from starving. And to guard us from other inconveniences, mischiefs, and dangers surrounding us, it is no less requisite: for, to shelter us from impressions of weather, we must spin, we must weave, we must build; and in order thereto we must scrape into the bowels of the earth to find our tools; we must sweat at the anvil to forge them for our use; we must frame arms to defend our safety and our store from the assaults of wild beasts, or of more dangerous neighbours, wild men. To furnish accommodations for our curiosity and pleasure, or to provide for the convenience and ornament of our life, still greater measures of industry are demanded; to satisfy those intents, a thousand contrivances of art, a thousand ways of trade and business do serve, without which they are not attainable. In whatever condition any man is, in what state soever he be placed, whatsoever calling or way of life he doth embrace, some peculiar business is thence imposed on him, which he cannot with any advantage or good success, with any grace, with any comfort to himself, or satisfaction to others, manage without competent industry: nothing will go on of itself, without our care to direct it, and our pains to hold it and forward it in the right course: all which things show that divine wisdom did intend that we should live in the exercise of industry, or not well without it; having so many needs to be supplied, so many desires to be appeased thereby; being exposed to so many troubles and difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without it. But further yet,

6. Let us consider that industry hath annexed thereto, by divine appointment and promise, the fairest fruits, and the richest rewards: all good things (being either such in themselves, or made such by human esteem) are the fruits of industry; ordered to sprout from it, under the protection and influence of God's blessing which commonly doth attend it.

All good things, indeed, are the gifts of God, and freely dispensed by his hand; but he doth not give them absolutely without condition, nor miraculously without concurrence of ordinary means: by supporting our active powers, and supplying needful aid to our endeavours; by directing and upholding us in the course of our action; by preventing or removing obstables that might cross us; by granting that final success which dependeth on his pleasure, he doth confer them on us; our hand commonly is God's hand, by which he worketh good and reacheth out benefits to us; governing and wielding it as he pleaseth.[k]

God, indeed, could not well proceed otherwise in dispensing his favours to us; not well, I say; that is, not without subverting the method of things which himself hath established; not without slighting and voiding his own first bounty, or rendering the common gifts of nature (our reason, our senses, our active pow-

* Διὰ τοῦτο εἰς ἀνάγκην κατέστησεν ἐργασίας ὁ Θεός, &c.—Chrys. in Act. Hom. 35.

——curis acuens mortalia corda;
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.
Virg. Georg. i.

[k] Psal. xxxvii. 3, 23; Prov. iii. 6,—Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.—Judges vi. 36; vii. 7; 2 Kings v. 2; Josh. i. 17, 9.

ers) vain and useless; not without making us incapable of any praise, or any reward,* which suppose works achieved by our earnest endeavour; not without depriving us of that sweetest content, which springeth from enjoying the fruit of our labour.

Hence it is, that whatever in holy scripture is called the gift of God, is otherwhile affirmed to be the effect of industry; it being the usual condition upon which, and the instrument whereby, divine Providence conveyeth good things to us :† what God said to Joshua, doth imply the general method of his proceeding, *Only be thou strong and courageous —that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.*[l]

Hence whatever we are directed to pray for, we are also exhorted to work for ;‡ declaring thereby, that we are serious in our devotion, and do not mock God, asking that of him which we deem not worth our pains to acquire. It was well said of Cato in Sallust, *Vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prospere omnia cedunt : ubi socordiæ te atque ignaviæ tradideris nequicquam deos implores ; irati, infestique sunt.* We are bid to pray even for our daily bread, yet we may starve if we do not work for it; and in St. Paul's judgment deserve to do so.

Hence we are bound to thank God for all those things, for the want of which we must thank ourselves, and condemn our own sloth.

Hence, although we should cast our care on God, and rely on his providence, being solicitous for nothing; yet we must not so trust him as to tempt him, by neglecting the means, which he doth offer, of relieving ourselves; to be presumptuously slothful being no less blameable, than to be distrustfully careful.

Hence God in all such cases, when we do need any good thing, is said to be our helper and succourer to the obtaining it; which doth imply that we must cooperate with him, and join our forces to those which he doth afford; so that as we can do nothing without him, so he will do nothing without us; yea, so that sometime we are said also to help God; *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*[m] If ever God doth perform all without human labour conspiring, it is only in behalf of those who are ready to do their best, but unable to do any thing, being overpowered by the insuperable difficulty of things: but he never doth act miracles, or control nature; he never doth stretch forth his arm, or interpose special power, in favour of wilful and affected sluggards.

In fine, it is very plain both in common experience, declaring the course of providence, and in holy scripture, expressing God's intention, that Almighty God doth hold forth all good things as the prizes and recompenses of our vigilant care, and painful endeavour; as by surveying particulars we may clearly discern.

Nothing is more grateful to men, than *prosperous success* in their undertakings, whereby they attain their ends, satisfy their desires, save their pains, and come off with credit; this commonly is the effect of industry* (which commandeth fortune, to which all things submit and serve), and scarce ever is found without it: an industrious person, who as such is not apt to attempt things impossible or unpracticable, can hardly fail of compassing his designs, because he will apply all means requisite, and bend all his forces thereto; striving to break through all difficulties, and to subdue all oppositions thwarting his purposes: but nothing of worth or weight can be achieved with half a mind, with a faint heart, with a lame endeavour: any enterprize undertaken without resolution, managed without care, prosecuted without vigour, will easily be dashed, and prove abortive, ending in disappointment, damage, disgrace,

* Καί τινος ἔμελλες λαμβάνειν τὸν μισθὸν, εἰ τὸ πᾶν ἔμελλεν ἔσεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ.—Chrys. in Eph. Orat. 2.

† Περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχὴ διάκειται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνους ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ οἰκειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος,—Chrys. in Joh. Or. 36.

Διὰ τοῦτο οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἑαυτοῦ ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἀφῆκέ τι ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα εὐπρόσωπον λάβῃ πρόφασιν τοῦ δικαίως ἡμᾶς στεφανοῦν.—Chrys. tom. 5; Or. 28.

‡ Αὐτός τι νῦν ὁρῶν, εἶτα τοὺς θεοὺς κάλει.—Cato apud Sal. in Bello Catil.——Τὰν χεῖρα ποτιφέροντα δεῖ τὰν τύχαν ἐπικαλεῖν.—Plut. Apoph. Lac.

[l] Josh. i. 7.

* Τῆς ἐπιμελείας πάντα δοῦλα γίγνεται.—Antiph. Quodcunque imperavit sibi animus, obtinuit, &c.—*Sen. de Ira*, ii. 12.

[m] Judges v. 23; Psal. lxxii. 12; xxii. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 10; 2 Chron. xiv. 11; 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

and dissatisfaction: so the Wise Man doth assure us: *The soul* (saith he) *of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat:*[n] the one pineth away with ineffectual and fruitless desires; the other thriveth upon satisfaction in prosperous success.

Plentiful accommodations for our sustenance and convenience all men will agree to be very desirable;[o] and these are indeed the blessings of Him who *visiteth the earth and enricheth it; who crowneth the earth with his goodness*, and *whose clouds drop fatness;*[p] but they are so dispensed by Heaven, that industry must concur therewith in deriving them to us, and sloth will debar us of them; for *he*, saith the holy Oracle, *that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: and the thoughts of the diligent alone tend to plenteousness;* but *the sluggard shall beg in harvest, and have nothing;* and *the idle soul shall suffer hunger.*[q]

Wealth is that which generally men of all things are wont to affect and covet with most ardent desire, as the great storehouse of their needs and conveniences, the sure bulwark of their state and dignity; the universal instrument of compassing their designs and pleasures; and most evident it is, that in the natural course of things, industry is the way to acquire it, to secure it, to improve and enlarge it; the which course, pursued innocently and modestly, God will be so far from obstructing, that he will further and bless it; for that indeed it would be a flaw in providence, if honest industry, using the means it affordeth, should fail of procuring a competency; which joined with a pious contentedness, in St. Paul's computation, is *great wealth.* Wherefore although Solomon telleth us that *the blessing of the Lord is that which maketh rich;* yet doth he not forget or contradict himself, when he also doth affirm, that *the hand of the diligent maketh rich;* and that *he who gathereth by labour shall increase;*[r] because God blesseth the industrious, and by his own hand, as the most proper instrument, maketh him rich. When the Preacher said, *There is a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth,*[s] he knew well enough what man it was, to whom God giveth them; and that sluggards were not fit objects of that liberality: for he had observed it to be their doom to be poor and beggarly, their nature to waste and embezzle an estate: he could assure us, that *drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags;* he could propound it as a certain observation, that *he who is slothful in his work is brother to a great waster;*[t] or that want of industry in our business will no less impair our estate, than prodigality itself; he could more than once warn the slothful, that if he did *sleep on,*[u] or persist in his sluggish way, indigency would surprise and seize on him with an insupportable violence: *So* (saith he) *shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*[v]

Another darling of human affection (and a jewel indeed of considerable worth and use in our life) is honour, or reputation among men: this also plainly, after the common reason and course of things, is purchased and preserved by industry: for he that aspireth to worthy things, and assayeth laudable designs, pursuing them steadily with serious application of heart, and resolute activity, will rarely fail of good success, and consequently will not miss honour, which ever doth crown victory; and if he should hap to fail in his design, yet he will not lose his credit; for having meant well, and done his best, all will be ready to excuse, many to commend him; the very qualities which industry doth exercise, and the effects which it doth produce, to beget honour, as being ornaments of our person and state. God himself (from whom *honour cometh,*[w] and whose special prerogative it is to bestow it, he, as King of the world, being the fountain of honour) will be concerned to dignify an industrious management of his

[n] Prov. xiii. 4; xxi. 25.
[o] Prov. xv. 30.
[p] Psal. lxv. 9, 11.
[q] Prov. xii. 11; xxi. 5; (*desist in* LXX.) Prov. xx. 4; xix. 15.
[r] 1 Tim. vi. 6; Prov. xv. 16; x. 22; xxii. 4; 1 Chron. xxix. 12; Eccles. v. 19; Prov. x. 4; xiii. 11.
[s] Eccl. vi. 1, 2.—St. Paul exhorteth to *work with our hands, ἵνα μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε,*—1 Thess. iv. 11.
[t] Prov. xxiii. 21; xviii. 9.
[u] Prov. x. 4.
[v] Prov. vi. 11; xxiv. 34.
[w] 1 Chron. xxix. 12; Dan. v. 18; Eccles. v. 19.

gifts with that natural and proper recompense thereof; conducting him who fairly treadeth in the path of honour, that he shall safely arrive unto it. It is therefore a matter of easy observation, which the wise prince doth prompt us to mark: *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men:*[x] that is, diligence, as it is the fairest, so it is the surest way to the best preferment: as it qualifieth a man for employment, and rendereth him useful to the world, so it will procure worthy employment for him, and attract the world to him; as the same great author again doth assert: *The hand* (saith he) *of the diligent shall bear rule;*[y] yea, so honourable a thing is industry itself, that an exercise thereof in the meanest rank is productive of esteem, as the Wise Man again doth observe and tell us: *He that waiteth on his master* (that is, with diligence attendeth on the business committed to him) *shall be honoured.*[z]

No industrious man is contemptible; for he is ever looked upon as being in a way of thriving, of working himself out from any straits, of advancing himself into a better condition. But without industry we cannot expect any thing but disrespect, shame, and reproach, which are the certain portion of the slothful; he not having the heart to enterprise, or the resolution and patience to achieve any thing deserving regard, or apt to procure it; he wanting all the ornaments and good fruits that grow from industry: he being only fit for a sordid and servile condition; whence *the slothful* (saith Solomon) *shall be under tribute;* and, *He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame;*[a] he causeth it to his relations by his beggarly accoutrements, he causeth it much more to himself by his despicable faultiness, and by the disgraceful consequences of it.

Another yet more precious good, far surpassing all external advantages of our state; the which, in the judgment of him who (together with it having a full possession of all secular prosperity, wealth, dignity, and power) was best able to prize it, *is better than rubies, and incomparably doth excel all things that may be desired,*[b] as ennobling, enriching, and embellishing our better part: wisdom, I mean, or a good comprehension and right judgment about matters of highest importance to us, is the prize of industry, and not to be gained without it; nature conferreth little thereto,* fortune contributeth much less; it cannot be bought at any rate; *It cannot* (saith Job) *be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire;*[c] it is the offspring of watchful observation and experience, of serious meditation and study; of careful reflection on things, marking, comparing, and weighing their nature, their worth, their tendencies and consequences: these are needful to the getting of wisdom, because truth, which it seeketh, commonly doth not lie in the surface, obvious to a superficial glance, nor only dependeth on a simple consideration of few things; but is lodged deep in the bowels of things, and under a knotty complication of various matters; so that we must dig to come at it, and labour in unfolding it: nor is it an easy task to void the prejudices springing from inclination or temper, from education or custom, from passion and interest, which cloud the mind, and obstruct the attainment of wisdom.

If we will have it, we must get it as Solomon himself did, that great master of it. How was that? *I gave* (saith he) *my heart to know wisdom.* He who made it his option and choice before all things; who so earnestly and so happily did pray for it; upon whom it is so expressly said that God in a special manner and plentiful measure did bestow it;[d] who averreth God to be the sole donor of it (for, *The Lord*, saith he, *giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding;*[e]) yet even he did first give his heart to it before it was given into his heart: he did not only gape for

[x] Prov. xxii. 29. [y] Prov. xii. 24.
[z] Prov. xxvii. 18,—Ὃς φυλάσσει τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριον, τιμηθήσεται.
[a] Prov. xii. 24,—Δόλιοι δὲ ἔσυνται ἐν προνομῇ. Prov. x. 5.

* Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium.—*Hor. de Arte Poet.*

[b] Prov. viii. 11; iii. 14, 15; iv. 7; Job xxviii. 18.
[c] Job xxviii. 15, 16.
[d] Eccles. i. 17; ii. 3; 1 Kings iii. 9; iv. 29; Wisd. viii. 21; ix. 17; Eccles. ii. 26; James i. 5.
[e] Prov. ii. 6.

it, to receive it by mere infusion; but he worked and studied hard for it. He was indeed a great student, an inquisitive searcher into nature, and curious observer of the world, a profound considerer and comparer of things; and by that industrious course, promoted by divine blessing, he did arrive to that great stock of so renowned a wisdom.

And the same method it is which he prescribeth to us for getting it; exhorting us, that we *incline our ear unto wisdom, and apply our heart to understanding;* that we *cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding;* that we *seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure;*[f] in following which course he doth assure us of good success; for, *then* (saith he) *shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*, which is *the head* or chief part of *wisdom:* and, *Blessed* (saith he again, in the person and place of wisdom itself) *is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For he that findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.*[g] It is the way he supposeth of finding wisdom, to watch assiduously, to wait diligently upon the means of attaining her; and how infallible the acquist of her is thereby, she doth again by his mouth thus acquaint us: *I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me;* and *she* (saith his imitator) *is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her: whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travel: for he shall find her sitting at his doors.*[h]

This indeed is the only way; idleness is not capable of so rich and noble a purchase: a slothful person may be conceited, yea, needs must be so; but he can never be wise: *A sluggard* (saith Solomon) *is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*[i] This conceit of wisdom is a natural issue of his ignorance; and it is indeed no small part of his folly that he doth not perceive it; being no less stupid in reflection on his own mind, than in considering other matters: being always in a slumber, he will often fall into such pleasant dreams; and no wonder that he should presume upon abundance of knowledge, who not listing to take any pains in the search or discussion of things, doth snatch the first appearances, doth embrace every suggestion of his fancy, every conceit gratifying his humour, for truth.

What should I speak of learning, or the knowledge of various things, transcending vulgar apprehension? Who knoweth not that we cannot otherwise reach any part of that, than by assiduous study and contemplation? Who doth not find that all the power in the world is not able to command, nor all the wealth of the Indies to purchase one notion? Who can be ignorant that no wit alone or strength of parts can suffice, without great industry, to frame any science, to learn any one tongue, to know the history of nature or of Providence? It is certainly by Horace's method,*

Multa tulit, fecitque puer,——

by much exercise and endurance of pains, that any one can arrive to the mark of being learned or skilful in any sort of knowledge.

But further yet, virtue, the noblest endowment and richest possesion whereof man is capable; the glory of our nature, the beauty of our souls, the goodliest ornament and the firmest support of our life;† that also is the fruit and blessing of industry; that of all things most indispensably doth need and require it. It doth not grow in us by nature, nor befall us by fortune; for nature is so far from producing it, that it yieldeth mighty obstacles and resistances to its birth, there being in the best dispositions much averseness from good, and great proneness to evil; fortune doth not further its acquists, but casteth in rubs and hinderances thereto, every condition presenting its allurements or its affrightments from it; all things within us and about us conspire to render its production and its practice laborious.

It is ('tis true) a gift of Heaven, and

[f] Prov. ii. 2, 3, 4. [g] Prov. viii. 34, 35.
[h] Prov. viii. 17; Wisd. vi. 12, 13, 14.
[i] Prov. xxvi. 16.

* Qui cupit optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit, fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit.
Hor. de Arte Poet.

† Τῇ μὲν κακίᾳ ἡδονῇ τῇ δὲ ἀρετῇ συγκεκλήρωται πόνος.—Chrys. in Joh. Or. 36.
Κακία μὲν γὰρ αὐτοδίδακτον· ἀρετὴ δὲ οὐν πόνῳ κτᾶται.—Sen. de Provid. 2.

cannot be obtained without a special influence of divine grace; but it is given as children are (of whom it is said, *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward,*[j]) not without sore travail and labour of the mother, not without grievous difficulty and pangs in the birth. In our conversion to embrace virtue, God doth guide us; but to what? to sit still? No; to walk, to run in his ways: grace doth move us, but whereto? to do nothing? No; but to stir, and act vigorously; *The holy Spirit doth help our infirmities:*[k] but how could it help them, if we did not conjoin our best, though weak, endeavours with its operations? To what doth it *συναντιλαμβάνειν*, or *cohelp* us, but *to strive against sin, to work righteousness*, to perform duty with earnest intention of mind, and laborious activity? *God* (saith St. Chrysostom) *hath parted virtue with us, and neither hath left all to be in us, lest we should be elated to pride, nor himself hath taken all, lest we should decline to sloth.**

Indeed the very nature and essence of virtue doth consist in the most difficult and painful efforts of soul; in the extirpating rooted prejudices and notions from our understanding; in bending a stiff will, and rectifying crooked inclinations; in overruling a rebellious temper; in curbing eager and importunate appetites; in taming wild passions; in withstanding violent temptations; in surmounting many difficulties, and sustaining many troubles; in struggling with various unruly lusts within, and encountering many stout enemies abroad, which assault our reason, and *war against our soul:* in such exercises its very being lieth; its birth, its growth, its subsistence dependeth on them; so that from any discontinuance or remission of them it would soon decay, languish away, and perish.

What attention, what circumspection, and vigilancy of mind, what intention of spirit, what force of resolution, what command and care over ourselves doth it require, to keep our hearts from vain thoughts and evil desires; to guard our tongue from wanton, unjust, uncharitable discourse; to order our steps uprightly and steadily in all the paths of duty? *Καὶ τί οὐκ ἐπίπονον τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς*; *and what* (as St. Chrysostom asketh) *of all things belonging to virtue is not laborious?*[l] It is no small task to know it, wherein it consisteth, and what it demandeth of us; it is a far more painful thing to conform our practice unto its rules and dictates.

If travelling in a rough way;* if climbing up a steep hill; if combating stern foes, and fighting sharp battles; if crossing the grain of our nature and desires; if continually holding a strict rein over all our parts and powers, be things of labour and trouble, then greatly such is the practice of virtue.

Indeed each virtue hath its peculiar difficulty, needing much labour to master it: *Faith* is called *ἔργον πίστεως, the work of faith;*[m] and it is no such easy work as may be imagined, to bring our hearts unto a thorough persuasion about truths crossing our sensual conceits, and controlling our peevish humours; unto a perfect submission of our understanding, and resignation of our will to whatever God teacheth or prescribeth; to a firm resolution of adhering to that profession, which exacteth of us so much pains, and exposeth us to so many troubles.

Charity is also a laborious exercise of many good works; and he that will practise it must in divers ways labour hardly: he must labour in voiding from his soul many dispositions deeply radicated therein by nature, opinion, and custom; envy, frowardness, stubbornness, perverse, and vain selfishness; from whence wrath, revenge, spite, and malice do spring forth. He must labour in effectual performance of all good offices, and in catching all oc-

* Ἐμερίσατο πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀρετὴν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ οὔτε ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀφῆκε τὸ πᾶν εἶναι, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἀπόνοιαν ἐπαιρώμεθα, οὔτε αὐτὸς τὸ πᾶν ἔλαβεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ῥᾳθυμίαν ἀποκλίνωμεν· ἀλλ', &c.—Chrys. tom. 5; Or. 28.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ περὶ τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγχείρησις δίχα τῆς ἄνωθεν βοηθείας τελειωθήσεται· οὐδὲ ἡ ἄνωθεν χάρις ἐπὶ τὸν μὴ σπουδάζοντα παραγένοιτ' ἄν, ἀλλ' ἑκάτερα συγκεκρᾶσθαι προσήκει, σπουδήν τε ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ τὴν διὰ πίστεως ἄνωθεν καθήκουσαν συμμαχίαν εἰς τελείωσιν ἀρετῆς.—Bas. Const. Mon. cap. 15.

[j] Psal. cxxvii. 3.

[k] Rom. viii. 26,—*συναντιλαμβάνεται.* Heb. xii. 4; Rom. ii. 10; Acts x. 35.

* Τῆς ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
Ἀθάνατοι, μακρός τε καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν,
Καὶ τρηχύς.—— Hes. Ἔργ. α'.

[l] Chrys. in Joh. Or. 36.

[m] 1 Thess. i. 3; 2 Thess. i. 11; John vi. 29.

casions of doing good;[n] he must exert that *κόπον ἀκάπης*, that *labour of love*, whereof St. Paul doth speak;[o] he must (as that holy apostle directeth, not only in precept, but by his own practice) work with his own hands, that he may supply the wants of his neighbour.

Hope itself (which one would think, when grounded well, should be a no less easy than pleasant duty) doth need much labour to preserve it safe, straight, and stable, among the many waves and billows of temptation assaying to shake and subvert it; whence *a patience of hope* is recommended to us;[p] and we so often are exhorted to hold it fast, to keep it sure, firm, and unshaken to the end.

Temperance also surely demandeth no small pains;* it being no slight business to check our greedy appetites, to shun the enticements of pleasure, to escape the snares of company and example, to support the ill will and reproaches of those zealots and bigots for vice, who cannot tolerate any nonconformity to their extravagances; but, as St. Peter doth express it, *think it strange, if others do not run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking ill of them for it.*[q]

What should I speak of meekness, of patience, of humility, of contentedness? Is it not manifest how laborious those virtues are, and what pains are necessary in the obtaining in the exercise of them? what pains, I say, they require in the voidance of fond conceits, in the suppression of froward humours, in the quelling fierce passions, in the brooking grievous crosses and adversities, in the bearing heinous injuries and affronts?

Thus doth all virtue require much industry, and it therefore necessarily must itself be a great virtue, which is the mother, the nurse, the guardian of all virtues; yea, which indeed is an ingredient and constitutive part of every virtue; for if virtue were easily attainable or practicable without a good measure of pains, how could it be virtue? what excellency could it have, what praise could it claim, what reward could it expect? God hath indeed made the best things not easily attainable, hath set them high out of our reach, to exercise our industry in getting them, that we might raise ourselves to them, that being obtained, they may the more deserve our esteem, and his reward.

Lastly, The sovereign good, the last scope of our actions, the top and sum of our desires, happiness itself, or eternal life in perfect rest, joy, and glory; although it be the supreme gift of God, and special boon of divine grace (*τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *But*, saith St. Paul, *the gift of God's grace is eternal life*;)[r] yet it also by God himself is declared to be the result and reward of industry; for we are commanded *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, and to *give diligence in making our calling and election sure*, by virtuous practice; and, *God* (saith St. Paul) *will render to every man according to his works; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*;[s] and, in the close of God's book, it is proclaimed, as a truth of greatest moment, and special point of God's will, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.* It is plainly industry, which climbeth the holy mount; it is industry, which taketh *the kingdom of heaven by force;* it is industry, which *so runneth as to obtain* the prize, which so fighteth as *to receive the crown*, which so *watcheth* as to secure our everlasting interest to us.[t]

Thus do the choicest good things, of which we are capable, spring from industry, or depend upon it; and no considerable good can be attained without it: thus all the gifts of God are by it conveyed to us, or are rendered in effect beneficial to us; for the gifts of nature are but capacities, which it improveth; the gifts of fortune or providence are but instruments, which it employeth to our

* Πάντες ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ὑμνοῦσιν, ὡς καλὸν μὲν ἡ σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη, χαλεπὸν μέν τοι καὶ ἐπίπονον.—Plat. de Rep. 2.

[n] Gal. vi. 10.

[o] 1 Thess. i. 3; Heb. vi. 10; Eph. iv. 28; Acts xx. 35.

[p] Ἀκλινῆ.—Heb. x. 23; vi. 19; 1 Thess. i. 3; Heb. x. 36; vi. 11. Ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδήν.—Heb. iii. 6, 14; 2 Pet. i. 10.

[q] 1 Pet. iv. 4.

[r] Rom. vi. 23; Eph. ii. 8.

[s] Phil. ii. 12; 2 Pet. i. 10; Rom. ii. 6, 7, 10; vi. 22.

[t] Rev. xxii. 14; Heb. xii. 22; Matt. xi. 12; 1 Cor. ix. 24; James i. 12; Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13; Luke xii. 37; Rev. iii. 3

use; the gifts of grace are the supports and succours of it; and the very gift of glory is its fruit and recompense.

There are further several other material considerations and weighty motives to the practice of this duty, which meditation hath suggested to me: but these, in regard to your patience, must suffice at present; the other (together with an application proper to our condition and calling) being reserved to another occasion.

SERMON LI.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. ix. 10.—*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.*

INDUSTRY, which the divine Preacher in this text recommendeth to us, is a virtue of a very diffusive nature and influence; stretching itself through all our affairs, and twisting itself with every concern we have; so that no business can be well managed, no design accomplished, no good obtained without it: it therefore behoveth us to conceive a high opinion of it, and to inure our souls to the practice of it, upon all occasions: in furtherance of which purposes I formerly, not long since, did propound several motives and inducements; and now proceeding on, shall represent divers other considerations serviceable to the same end.

1. We may consider that industry is productive of ease itself, and preventive of trouble: it was no less solidly, than acutely and smartly advised by the philosopher Crates,* *Whether* (said he) *labour to be chosen, labour; or whether it be to be eschewed, labour, that thou mayest not labour; for by not labouring, labour is not escaped, but is rather pursued;* and St. Chrysostom† doth upon the same consideration urge industry, because *sloth* (saith he) *is wont to spoil us, and to yield us much pain.* No man can cozen nature, escaping the labour to which he was born; but rather attempting it, will delude himself, then finding most, when he shunneth all labour.

Sloth indeed doth affect ease and quiet, but by affecting them doth lose them; it hateth labour and trouble, but by hating them doth incur them; it is a self-destroying vice, not suffering those who cherish it to be idle, but creating much work, and multiplying pains unto them; engaging them into divers necessities and straits, which they cannot support with ease, and out of which, without extreme trouble, they cannot extricate themselves: Of this the Preacher doth afford us a plain instance: *By much slothfulness* (saith he) *the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.*[a] A little care taken at first about repairing the house, would have saved its decay and ruin, and consequently the vast charge and trouble becoming needful to re-edify it: and the like doth happen in most other cases and occurrences of life: idleness commonly doth let slip opportunities and advantages, which cannot with ease be retrieved; it letteth things fall into a bad case, out of which they can hardly be recovered.

The certain consequences of it (disgrace, penury, want of experience, disobliging and losing friends, with all the like mischiefs), cannot be supported without much disquiet; and they disable a man from redressing the inconveniences into which he is plunged.

But industry, by a little voluntary labour taken in due place and season, doth save much necessary labour afterward, and by moderate care doth prevent intolerable distress: and the fruits of it (wealth, reputation, skill, and dexterity in affairs, friendships, all advantages of fortune) do enable a man to pass his life with great ease, comfort, and delight.

2. Industry doth beget ease, by procuring good habits, and facility of acting things expedient for us to do. By taking pains to-day, we shall need less pains to-morrow; and by continuing the exercise, within a while we shall need no pains at all, but perform the most difficult tasks of duty, or of benefit to us, with perfect ease, yea commonly with great pleasure. What sluggish people account hard and irksome (as to rise ear-

* Εἰθ' αἱρετὸν ὁ πόνος, πόνει· εἴτε φευκτὸν, πόνει, ἵνα μὴ πονῇς· διὰ γὰρ τοῦ μὴ πόνειν οὐ φεύγεται πόνος, τῷ δὲ ἐναντίῳ καὶ διώκεται.—Crates. Ep. 4.

† Ἡ ἀργία διαφθείρειν ἡμᾶς εἴωθε, καὶ πολὺν παρέχειν τὸν πόνον.—Chrys. in Joh. Orat. 36.

[a] Eccles. x. 18.

ly, to hold close to study or business, to bear some hardship) will be natural and sweet; as proceeding from another nature, raised in us by use.

Industry doth breed assurance and courage, needful for the undertaking and prosecution of all necessary business, or for the performance of all duties incumbent on us.

No man can quite decline business, or disengage himself from duty, without infinite damage and mischief accruing to himself: but these an industrious man (confiding in this efficacious quality) will set upon with alacrity, and despatch with facility, his diligence voiding obstacles, and smoothing the way to him; whenas idleness, finding some difficulties, and fancying more, soon dishearteneth, and causeth a man to desist from action, rather choosing to crouch under the burden, than by endeavour to carry it through, to discharge himself thereof; whence, as to an industrious man things seeming difficult will prove easy, so to a slothful person the easiest things will appear impossible; according to Solomon's observation: *The way* (saith he) *of a slothful man* is an hedge of thorns, but the way of the upright is made plain;* whereas a slothful man, being apt to neglect his obligations, is opposed to an upright man, who hath a conscionable regard to them, and is willing to take pains in the discharge of them: so it is declared, that to the one the way is rough and thorny; to the other, beaten and expedite.

And again, *The slothful man* (saith he) *doth say, there is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets:*† he is very apt to conceit, or to pretend imaginary difficulties and hazards, and thence to be deterred from going about his business, or doing his duty. This consideration St. Chrysostom doth propose, exciting to an earnest pursuit of virtue; because, *There is* (saith he) *nothing so easy which our great sloth doth not represent very grievous and burdensome; nothing so painful and difficult, which diligence and willingness do not show to be very easy.*‡

3. We may consider that industry will sweeten all our enjoyments, and season them with a grateful relish; for as no man can well enjoy himself, or find sound content in any thing, while business or duty lie unfinished on his hand; so when he hath done his best toward the despatch of his work, he will then comfortably take his ease, and enjoy his pleasure; then his food doth taste savourily, then his divertisements and recreations have a lively gustfulness, then his sleep is very sound and pleasant, according to that of the Preacher, *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet.*[b]

4. Especially those accomodations prove most delightful, which our industry hath procured to us; we looking on them with a special tenderness of affection, as on the children of our endeavour; we being sensible at what costs of care and pain we did purchase them. If a man getteth wealth by fraud or violence, if he riseth to preferment by flattery, detraction, or any bad arts, he can never taste any good savour, or find sound comfort in them;* and from what cometh merely by chance, as there is no commendation due, so much satisfaction will not arise. It is the Wise Man's observation, *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting*,[c] and therefore it cannot be very grateful to him; but, addeth he, *the substance of a diligent man is precious;* that is, what a man compasseth by honest industry, that he is apt highly to prize; he triumpheth in it, and (in St. Paul's sense innocently) boasteth of it;[d] he feeleth a solid pleasure and a pure complacency therein: the manner of getting it doth more please him than the thing itself; as true hunters do love the sport more than the quarry, and generous warriors more rejoice in the victory than in the spoil; for *our soul*, as St. Chrysostom discourseth, *is more affected with those things, for which it hath laboured; for which reason*, addeth he,

* Prov. xv. 19. Ὁδοὶ ἀεργῶν ἐστρωμέναι ἀκάνθαις, αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρείων τετριμμέναι.

† Prov. xxii. 13; xxvi. 13. Προφασίζεται, καὶ λέγει ἀκνηρός, Λέων ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πλατείαις φονεύσω.

‡ Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἐστὶ ῥᾴδιον, ὁ μὴ σφόδρα βαρὺ καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ὁ πολὺς δείκνυσιν ὄκνος ἡμῶν· ὥσπερ ἐπίπονον καὶ ἡ δυσχερὴς, ὁ μὴ λίαν εὔχολον ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ἡ προθυμία—Chrys. tom. vi. Or. p. 15, 144.

Τὰ μὲν ῥᾴδια τοὺς ἀμελοῦντας φεύγει, τὰ δὲ χαλεπὰ ἐπιμελείαις ἁλίσκεται.—Plut. de Educ.

* Cui sit conditio dulcis sine pulvere palmæ? —*Hor. Ep.* i. 1.

[b] Eccles. v. 12; Τοῦ δούλου.

[c] Prov. xii. 27. [d] 1 Cor. ix. 15.

*God hath mixed labours with virtue itself, that he might endear it to us.** Yea, further,

5. The very exercise of industry immediately in itself is delightful, and hath an innate satisfaction, which tempereth all annoyances, and even ingratiateth the pains going with it.

The very settlement of our mind on fit objects, or its acquiescence in determinate action, conducing to a good end, whereby we are freed of doubt, distraction, and fastidious listlessness, doth minister content.

The reflection upon our having embraced a wise choice, our proceeding in a fair way, our being in chase of a good purpose, doth breed complacence.

To consider that we are spending our time accountably, and improving our talents to good advantage (to the service of God, the benefit of our neighbour, the bettering of our own state), is very cheering and comfortable.

And whereas *in all labour*, as the Wise Man telleth us, *there is profit*,[e] the foresight of that profit affordeth pleasure, the foretasting the good fruits of our industry is very delicious.

Hope, indeed, doth ever wait on industry: and what is more delightful than hope? This is the incentive, the support, the condiment of all honest labour;† in virtue whereof the husbandman toileth, the merchant trudgeth, the scholar ploddeth, the soldier dareth with alacrity and courage, not resenting any pains, not regarding any hazards, which attend their undertakings: this the holy apostles tell us did enable them with joy to sustain all their painful work and hazardous warfare; enjoining us also as to *work with fear*, so to *rejoice in hope*.[f]

In fine, industry doth free us from great displeasure, by redeeming us from the molestations of idleness, which is the most tedious and irksome thing in the world, racking our soul with anxious suspense and perplexing distraction;* starving it for want of satisfactory entertainment, or causingit to feed on its own heart by doleful considerations; infesting it with crowds of frivolous, melancholic, troublesome, stinging thoughts; galling it with a sense of our squandering away precious time, of our slipping fair opportunities, of our not using the abilities and advantages granted us, to any profit or fruit: whence St. Chrysostom saith very truly, that *there is nothing more unpleasant, more painful, more miserable, than a man that hath nothing to do: Is not this* (saith he) *worse than ten thousand chains, to hang in suspense, and be continually gaping, looking on those who are present?*† Indeed, the strictest imprisonment is far more tolerable, than being under restraint by a lazy humour from profitable employment: this enchaineth a man hand and foot, with more than iron fetters; this is beyond any imprisonment; it is the very entombment of a man,‡ quite in effect sequestering him from the world, or debarring him from any valuable concerns therein. And if liberty be *ἐξουσία αὐτοπραγίας, a power of doing what one liketh best;* then is he, who by his sloth is disabled from doing any thing wherein he can find any reasonable satisfaction, the veriest slave that can be; from which slavery industry freeing us, and disposing us to perform cheerfully whatever is convenient, thereby doeth us a great pleasure. Further,

6. Let us consider, that industry doth afford a lasting comfort, deposited in the memory and conscience of him that practiseth it. It will ever, upon his reviewing the passages of his life, be sweet to him to behold in them testimonies and monuments of his diligence; it will please him to consider, that he hath lived to purpose, having done somewhat considerable; that he hath made an advantageous use of his time; that he hath well husbanded the talents committed to him; that he hath accomplished (in some meas-

* Περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχὴ διακείται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνους ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ οἰκειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος.—Chrys. in Joh. Orat. 36.

† ——ipsa operis difficultate lætus spem segetis de labore metitur.—*Apud Aug. Ep.* 142.

e Prov. xiv. 23.

f 1 Cor. ix. 10; Rom. xii. 12; v. 2; Heb. iii. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 10; (Col. i. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 12; 1 John iii. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3; Tit. ii. 13.)

* Otio qui nescit uti, plus habet negotii, &c. Otioso in otio animus nescit quid quidem velit, &c.—*Ennius. apud Agel.* xix. 10.

† Καὶ τί ἀηδέστερον γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν ἔχοντος ποιεῖν; τί μοχθηρότερον; τί ταλαιπωρότερον; μυρίων οὐ χεῖρον τοῦτο δεσμῶν, χασμάσθαι καὶ κεχήνεναι διαπαντὸς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καθήμενον, ὁρῶντα τοὺς παριόντας;—Chrys. in Act. Or. 35.

‡ Otium est vivi hominis sepultura.

ure) the intents of God's bounty, and made some return for his excellent gifts. What comfort, indeed, can any man have, yea, how sore remorse must he feel, in reflecting upon a life spent in unfruitful and unprofitable idleness? How can he otherwise than bewail his folly and baseness in having lived (or rather having only been) in vain;* as the shadow and appearance of a man; in having lavished his days, in having buried his talents, in having embezzled his faculties of nature, and his advantages from Providence; in having defeated the good-will of God, and endeavoured no requital to the munificent goodness of his Maker, of his Preserver, his benign Lord and Master, his gracious Saviour and Redeemer?[g] How, without confusion, can he in his mind revolve, that he hath nowise benefited the world, and profited his neighbour, or obliged his friends, or rendered to his country (to the society or community of which he is a member) amends for all the safety and quiet, the support, the convenience, and the pleasure he hath enjoyed under its protection, and in its bosom? that he hath not borne a competent share in the common burdens, or paid a due contribution of his care and labour to the public welfare? How can such a man look inward upon himself with a favourable eye, or pardon himself for so loathsome defaults?

7. Let us consider, that industry doth argue a generous and ingenuous complexion of soul.

It implieth a mind not content with mean and vulgar things (such as nature dealeth to all, or fortune scattereth about), but aspiring to things of high worth, and pursuing them in a brave way, with adventurous courage, by its own forces, through difficulties and obstacles.

It signifieth in a man a heart, not enduring to owe the sustenance or convenience of his life to the labour or the liberality of others; to pilfer a livelihood from the world; to reap the benefit of other men's care and toil, without rendering a full compensation, or outdoing his private obligations by considerable service and beneficence to the public.

A noble heart will disdain to subsist like a drone upon the honey gathered by others' labour; like a vermin to filch its food out of the public granary; or like a shark to prey on the lesser fry; but will one way or other earn his subsistence: for he that doth not earn, can hardly own his bread, as St. Paul implieth, when he saith, *Them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*[h]

Of this generous ingenuity we have a notable instance in that great apostle himself:[i] which he doth often represent as a pattern to us, professing much complacence therein. He with all right and reason might have challenged a comfortable subsistence from his disciples, in recompense for the incomparable benefits he did confer on them, and of the excessive pains he did endure for their good: this he knew well;[j] but yet did rather choose to support himself by his own labour, than anywise to seem burdensome or troublesome to them: *These hands* (saith he) *have ministered to my necessities, and to them that are with me. I have showed you all things, that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*[k] This was the practice of him, who was in *labours most abundant;* and such is the genius of every man, who upon principles of conscience, reason, and honour, is industrious. Of him it may be said, as of Solomon's good housewife, *She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; she is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her food from afar; she looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*[l]

Sloth is a base quality, the argument of a mind wretchedly degenerate and mean; which is content to grovel in a despicable state; which aimeth at no worthy thing, nor pursueth any thing in a laudable way; which disposeth a man to live *gratis* (precariously) and ingratefully on the public stock, as an insignifi-

* Diu fuit, non diu vixit.

[g] Matt. xxv. 26.

[h] 2 Thess. iii. 12,—Τὸν ἑαυτῶμ ἄρτον.

[i] 1 Cor. ix. 15.

[j] 2 Thess. iii. 9; 1 Cor. ix. 11; 1 Thess. ii. 6.

[k] Acts xx. 34, 35; xviii. 3; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 2 Cor. xi. 9, 23.

[l] Prov. xxxi. 13, 14, 27.

cant cypher among men, as a burden of the earth, as a wen of any society; sucking aliment from it, but yielding no benefit or ornament thereto.

8. Industry is a fence to innocence and virtue; a bar to all kinds of sin and vice, guarding the avenues of our heart, keeping off the occasions and temptations to vicious practice. When a man is engaged in honest employment, and seriously intent thereon, his mind is prepossessed and filled, so that there is no room or vacancy for ill thoughts or base designs to creep in; his senses do not lie open to ensnaring objects; he wants leisure and opportunity of granting audience to the solicitations of sinful pleasure; and is apt to answer them with a *non vacat*;* the Devil can hardly find advantage of tempting him, at least many devils cannot get access to him, according to that observation in Cassian, *A working monk is assaulted by one devil, but an idle one is spoiled by numberless bad spirits.*† The case of men ordinarily is like to that of Ægisthus:

—— ne nil ageretur, amavit;—*Ovid de Remed.*

rather than do nothing, he was ready to do ill; he not having business to employ his thoughts, wanton desires did insinuate themselves into his heart, and transported him to that disastrous wickedness, which supplied matter to so many tragedies; and the like instance the sacred history suggesteth in king David, who, *walking*, it is said, *on the roof of his house*,[m] his mind then roving, and being untacked from honest cares, that temptation seized on him, whereby he was plunged into that woful misdemeanour, which did create to him so much sorrow, did make such a spot in his life, and leave such a blur on his memory; whence yet we may draw some benefit, taking it as a profitable document and warning, how idleness doth expose the best men to danger.

Idleness is indeed the nursery of sins, which as naturally grow up therein as weeds in a neglected field, or insects in a standing puddle: *Idleness teacheth much evil.*[n] It is the general trap, whereby every tempter assayeth to catch our soul: for the mind being loose from care, Satan is ready to step in with his suggestions, the world presenteth its allurements, fleshly desires rise up; proud, froward, wanton cogitations slip in; ill company doth entice, ill example is regarded, every temptation doth object and impress itself with great advantage and force; men in such a case being apt to close and comply with temptations, even to divert their mind, and entertain themselves, to cure their listlessness, to pass their time,* committing sin for want of better occupation. Hence, in places where there is least work, the worst sins do most prevail; and idleness therefore was by the prophet reckoned one of the three great sins of Sodom, parents of the rest: *Behold* (saith Ezekiel) *this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her:*[o] hence it seldom doth happen in any way of life, that a sluggard and a rakehell do not go together; or that he who is idle is not also dissolute.

9. Particularly industry doth prevent the sins of vain curiosity, pragmaticalness, troublesome impertinency, and the like pests of common life, into which persons not diligently following their own business will assuredly fall. *We hear* (saith St. Paul to the Thessalonians) *that there are some who walk among you disorderly; working not at all, but are busybodies.*† It is no wonder, if they did *not work at all*, that they should *walk disorderly*; or that quite neglecting their own concerns, they should περιεργάζεσθαι, *over-work*, or be too busy in matters not belonging to them, intruding themselves into the affairs of their neighbours: for there is a natural connection between these things, since every man must be thinking, must be doing, must be saying somewhat, to spend his leisure, to uphold conversation, to please himself, and grat-

* Semper te diabolus inveniat occupatum.—*Bern. Form. Hon.* v. cap. 7.

† Operans monachus uno dæmone pulsatur, otiosus vero innumeris spiritibus devastatur.—*Cass. de Instit.* x. 23.

[m] 2 Sam. xi. 2.

* ———— si non
Intendes animum studiis, et rebus honestis,
Invidia vel amore vigil torquebere ——.
Hor. Ep. i. 2.

† 2 Thess. iii. 11,—Μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους· working nothing, but overworking.

[n] Ecclus. xxxiii. 27.

[o] Ezek. xvi. 49.

ify others, to appear somebody among his companions; to avoid the shame of being quite out of employment: wherefore not having the heart to mind his own affairs, he will take the boldness to meddle with the concerns of other men: if he cannot have the substance, he will set up an idol of business, and seem very active in his impertinency; in order thereto, being curiously inquisitive, and prying into the discourse, actions, and affairs of all men. This men are apt to do in their own defence: and besides, idleness doth put men into a loose, garish, wanton humour, disposing them without heed or regard to meddle with any thing, to prattle at any rate. In fine, whoever hath no work at home, will be gadding to seek entertainment abroad, like those gossips of whom St. Paul saith, *They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*[p] If indeed we consider all the frivolous and petulant discourse, the impertinent chattings, the rash censures, the spiteful detractions which are so rife in the world, and so much poison all conversation, we shall find the main root of them to be a want of industry in men, or of diligent attendance on their own matters; which would so much take up their spirit and time, that they would have little heart or leisure to search into or comment upon other men's actions and concerns.

10. Let us consider that industry is needful in every condition and station, in every calling and way of life: in all relations, for our good behaviour, and right discharge of our duty in them. Without it we cannot in any state act decently or usefully, either to the benefit and satisfaction of others, or to our own advantage and comfort.

Are we rich? Then is industry requisite for keeping and securing our wealth, for managing it wisely, for employing it to its proper uses and best advantages (in the service of God, in beneficence to our neighbour, in advancing public good;) so that we may render a good account to him who hath intrusted us with the stewardship thereof: industry is very needful to guard us from the temptations and mischiefs to which wealth doth expose us, that it do not prove a treacherous snare, an unwieldy burden, a destructive poison and plague to us, throwing us into pride and vanity, into luxury, into stupidity, into distracting solicitude, into a base, worldly, and earthly temper of heart, into a profane oblivion of God, and of our own souls.

Are we in conspicuous rank of dignity, or in honour and repute among men? Then is industry requisite to keep us fast in that state, to hold us from tumbling from that pinnacle down into extreme disgrace; for then all eyes are upon us, strictly observing what we do, and ready to pass censure on our actions; so that great diligence is necessary to approve ourselves, and shun obloquy. Nothing is more brittle than honour;[q] every little thing hitting on it is able to break it, and therefore without exceeding care we cannot preserve it. Nothing is more variable or fickle than the opinions of men (wherein honour consisteth;) it is therefore no easy matter to fix or detain them in the same place.

Honour cannot live without food or fuel; it must be nourished by worthy actions; without a continual supply of them it will decay, languish, and pine away: industry therefore is required to keep it; and no less is necessary to use it well, in a due subordination to God's honour, and reference to his service, that, instead of an ornament and convenience, it do not prove a baneful mischief to us; puffing up our minds with vain conceits and complacencies, inclining us to arrogance and contempt of others, tempting us by assuming to ourselves to rob God of his due glory; to decline which evils great care is requisite; we must have a steady ballast, and we must hold the rudder warily, when we carry so great sail.

On the other hand, are we poor and low in the world; or do we lie under disgrace? Then do we much need industry to shun extremities of want and ignominy; that we be not swallowed up and overwhelmed by need or contempt; to support us under our pressures, to keep up our spirits from dejection and disconsolateness; to preserve us from impious discontentedness and impatience: industry is the only remedy of that condition,

[p] 1 Tim. v. 13.

[q] Vitrea fama. *Hor.*—Eccl. x. 1.

enabling us to get out of it, retrieving a competence of wealth or credit; or disposing us to bear it handsomely, and with comfort; so as not to become forlorn or abject wretches.

It is so needful to every condition; it is so for all vocations; for,

Is a man a governor, or a superior in any capacity? Then what is he but a public servant, doomed to continual labour, hired for the wages of respect and pomp, to wait on his people; in providing for their needs, protecting their safety, preserving their peace and welfare; where is he but on a stage, whereon he cannot well act his part, without vigilant attendance to his charge, and constant activity in performing all the functions thereof? He is engaged in great obligations and necessities of using extreme diligence, both in regard to himself and others. Homer's description of a prince is a good one: *One who hath much people, and many cares committed to him;*

Ὦ λαοὶ τ' ἐπιτετρύφαται, καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε.

He must watchfully look to his own steps, who is to guide others by his authority and his example. All his actions require special conduct, not only his own credit and interest, but the common welfare depending thereon. He must heedfully advise what to do, he must diligently execute what he resolveth on. He hath the most ticklish things that can be (the rights and interests, the opinions and humours of men) to manage. He hath his own affections to curb and guide, that they be not perverted by any sinister respects, not swayed by any unjust partiality, not corrupted by flattery or fear. He will find, that to wield power innocently, to brandish the sword of justice discreetly and worthily, for the maintenance of right, and encouragement of virtue, for the suppression of injury, and correction of vice, is a matter of no small skill or slight care.

Industry is indeed a quality most proper for persons of high rank and dignity, or of great power and authority; who have special opportunities to employ it in weighty affairs to great advantage; whose undertakings being of vast moment, do need answerable efforts to move and guide them. The industry of a mechanic or a rustic, acting in a low and narrow sphere, can effect no great matter, and therefore itself need not to be great: but the industry of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, may have a large and potent influence, so as to render a nation, a county, a town, happy, prosperous, glorious, flourishing in peace, in plenty, in virtue; it therefore for achieving such purposes need be, and should be proportionably great; a small power not being able to move a great weight, nor a weak cause to produce a mighty effect. Wherefore Cicero recommending Pompey for a public charge, doth reckon these to be the *imperatoriæ virtutes*, qualities befitting a prince, or general, wherein he did excel, *Labour in business, valour in dangers, industry in acting, nimbleness in performance, counsel in providing.** — And Alexander the Great, reflecting on his friends degenerating into sloth and luxury, told them, that it was *a most slavish thing to luxuriate, and a most royal thing to labour.*†

And for those who move in a lower orb of subjection or service, I need not show how needful industry is for them. Who knoweth not that to be a good subject, doth exact a careful regard to the commands of superiors, and a painful diligence in observing them? that to make a good servant, fidelity and diligence must concur? whereof the first doth suppose the last, it being a part of honesty in a servant to be diligent; whence δοῦλε πονηρὲ καὶ ὀκνηρέ, *O thou wicked and slothful servant,*‡ were in the gospel well coupled; and the first epithet was grounded on the second, he being therefore wicked, because he had been slothful.

Neither can a man be a true friend, or a good neighbour, or anywise a good relative, without industry disposing him to undergo pains in performing good offices, whenever need doth require, or occasion invite.

In fine, it is palpable, that there is no calling of any sort, from the sceptre to the spade, the management whereof with any good success, any credit, any satis-

* Labor in negotio, fortitudo in periculis, industria in agendo, celeritas in conficiendo, consilium in providendo, &c.—*Cic. pro lege Manil.*

† Δουλικώτατόν ἐστι τὸ τρυφᾶν, βασιλικώτατον δὲ τὸ πονεῖν.—Plut. in Alex. p. 1262.

‡ Matt. xxv. 26.

faction, doth not demand much work of the head, or of the hand, or of both.

If wit or wisdom be the head, if honesty be the heart, industry is the right hand of every vocation; without which the shrewdest insight and the best intention can execute nothing.

A sluggard is qualified for no office, no calling, no station among men; he is a mere nobody, taking up room, pestering and clogging the world.

11. It also may deserve consideration that it is industry whereto the public state of the world, and of each commonweal therein, is indebted for its being, in all conveniences and embellishments belonging to life, advanced above rude and sordid barbarism; yea, whereto mankind doth owe all that good learning, that morality, those improvements of soul, which elevate us beyond brutes.

To industrious study is to be ascribed the invention and perfection of all those arts whereby human life is civilized, and the world cultivated with numberless accommodations, ornaments, and beauties.

All the comely, the stately, the pleasant and useful works which we do view with delight, or enjoy with comfort, industry did contrive them, industry did frame them.

Industry reared those magnificent fabrics, and those commodious houses; it formed those goodly pictures and statues; it raised those convenient causeways, those bridges, those aqueducts; it planted those fine gardens with various flowers and fruits; it clothed those pleasant fields with corn and grass; it built those ships, whereby we plough the seas, reaping the commodities of foreign regions. It hath subjected all creatures to our command and service, enabling us to subdue the fiercest, to catch the wildest, to render the gentler sort most tractable and useful to us. It taught us, from the wool of the sheep, from the hair of the goat, from the labours of the silk-worm, to weave us clothes to keep us warm, to make us fine and gay. It helped us from the inmost bowels of the earth to fetch divers needful tools and utensils.

It collected mankind into cities, and compacted them into orderly societies, and devised wholesome laws, under shelter whereof we enjoy safety and peace, wealth and plenty, mutual succour and defence, sweet conversation and beneficial commerce.

It by meditation did invent all those sciences whereby our minds are enriched and ennobled, our manners are refined and polished, our curiosity is satisfied, our life is benefited.*

What is there which we admire, or wherein we delight, that pleaseth our mind, or gratifieth our sense, for the which we are not beholden to industry?

Doth any country flourish in wealth, in grandeur, in prosperity? It must be imputed to industry, to the industry of its governors settling good order, to the industry of its people following profitable occupations; so did Cato, in that notable oration of his in Sallust,† tell the Roman senate, that it was not by the force of their arms, but by the industry of their ancestors, that the commonwealth did arise to such a pitch of greatness. When sloth creepeth in, then all things corrupt and decay; then the public state doth sink into disorder, penury, and a disgraceful condition.

12. Industry is commended to us by all sorts of examples, deserving our regard and imitation. All nature is a copy thereof, and the whole world a glass wherein we may behold this duty represented to us.

We may easily observe every creature about us incessantly working toward the end for which it was designed, indefatigably exercising the powers with which it is endued, diligently observing the laws of its creation. Even beings void of reason, of sense, of life itself, do suggest unto us resemblances of industry; they being set in continual action toward the effecting reasonable purposes, conducing to the preservation of their own beings, or to the furtherance of common good.

The heavens do roll about with unwearied motion; the sun and stars do perpetually dart their influences; the earth is ever labouring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the plants are drawing sap, and sprouting out fruits and seeds, to feed us and propagate themselves; the rivers are running, the seas are tossing,

* Ut varias usus meditando extunderet artes
Paullatim, &c. *Virg. Georg.* I.

† Cat. apud Sallust. in bello Catil.

the winds are blustering, to keep the elements sweet in which we live.

Solomon sendeth us to the ant, and biddeth us to *consider her ways*, which *provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.*[s] Many such instructors we may find in nature; the like industrious providence we may observe in every living creature; we may see this running about, that swimming, another flying, in purveyance of its food and support.

If we look up higher to rational and intelligent natures, still more noble and apposite patterns do object themselves to us.

Here below, every field, every shop, every street, the hall, the exchange, the court itself (all full of business, and fraught with the fruits of industry), do mind us how necessary industry is to us.

If we consult history, we shall there find, that the best men have been most industrious; that all great persons, renowned for heroical goodness (the worthy patriarchs, the holy prophets, the blessed apostles), were for this most commendable; that, neglecting their private ease, they did undertake difficult enterprises, they did undergo painful labours, for the benefit of mankind; they did pass their days, like St. Paul, ἐν κόποις καὶ μόχθοις, *in labours* and *toilsome pains*,[t] for those purposes.

Our great example, the life of our blessed Lord himself, what was it but one continual exercise of labour? His mind did ever stand bent in careful attention, studying to do good?[u] His body was ever moving in wearisome travel to the same divine intent.

If we yet soar further in our meditation to the superior regions, we shall there find the blessed inhabitants of heaven, the courtiers and ministers of God, very busy and active; they do vigilantly wait on God's throne,* in readiness to receive and to despatch his commands; they are ever on the wing, and fly about like lightning *to do his pleasure*. They are attentive to our needs, and ever ready to protect, to assist, to relieve us! Especially, they are diligent guardians and succourers of good men; *officious spirits, sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation*:[v] so even the seat of perfect rest is no place of idleness.

Yea, God himself, although immovably and infinitely happy, is yet immensely careful, and everlastingly busy: he rested once from that great work of creation; but yet *My Father* (saith our Lord) *worketh still*:[w] and he never will rest from his works of providence and of grace. His eyes continue watchful over the world, and his hands streched out in upholding it. He hath a singular regard to every creature, supplying the needs of each, and *satisfying the desires of all*.[x]*

And shall we alone be idle, while all things are so busy? Shall we keep our hands in our bosom, or strech ourselves on our beds of laziness, while all the world about us is hard at work in pursuing the designs of its creation? Shall we be wanting to ourselves, while so many things labour for our benefit? Shall not such a cloud of examples stir us to some industry? Not to comply with so universal a practice, to cross all the world, to disagree with every creature, is it not very monstrous and extravagant?

I should close all this discourse with that, at which, in pitching on this subject, I chiefly did aim, an application exhortatory to ourselves, urging the practice of this virtue by considerations peculiar to us as scholars, and derived from the nature of our calling. But the doing this requiring a larger discourse than the time now will allow, I shall reserve it to another occasion; adding only one consideration more.

13. Lastly, if we consider, we shall find the root and source of all the inconveniences, the mischiefs, the wants of which we are apt to complain, to be our sloth; and that there is hardly any of them which commonly we might not easily prevent or remove by industry. Why is any man a beggar, why con-

* Σῷ δὲ θρόνῳ πυρόεντι παρεστᾶσιν πολύμοχθοι Ἄγγελοι.—— Orph.

[s] Prov. vi. 6, &c.

[t] 2 Cor. xi. 27.

[u] Acts x.

* O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes tanquam singulos. —*Aug. Conf.* iv. 11.

[v] Psal. ciii. 21, 22; xxxiv. 7; xci. 11; Heb. i. 14.

[w] Gen. ii. 2; John v. 17.

[x] Psal. cxxi. 3; cxxvii. 1; Zech. iv. 10; 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Psal. cxlv. 15, 16; (Prov. v. 21; xv. 3; Psal. xxxiv. 15; Gen. xxxi. 49; Jer. xxxi. 18.)

temptible, why ignorant, why vicious, why miserable? Why, but for this one reason, because he is slothful; because he will not labour to rid himself of those evils? What could we want, if we would but take the pains to seek it, either by our industry or by our devotion? For where the first will not do, the second cannot fail to procure any good thing from him, who giveth *to all men liberally*,[y] and hath promised to supply the defect of our ability by his free bounty; so that if we join these two industries (industrious action and industrious prayer[z]) there is nothing in the world so good, or so great, of which, if we are capable, we may not assuredly become masters: and even for industry itself, especially in the performance of all our duties toward God, let us industriously pray: even so, *The God of peace sanctify us wholly, and make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight; through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.*[a] Amen.

SERMON LII.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR GENERAL CALLING, AS CHRISTIANS.

ROM. xii. 11.—*Not slothful in bussness.**

INDUSTRY is a very eminent virtue, being an ingredient, or the parent, of all other virtues, of constant use upon all occasions, and having influence upon all our affairs.

For it is in our nature framed; all our powers of soul and body being fitted for it, tending to it, requiring it for their preservation and perfection.

We were designed for it in our first happy state; and upon our lapse thence were further doomed to it, as the sole remedy of our needs and the inconveniences to which we became exposed. For

Without it we cannot well sustain or secure our life in the enjoyment of any comfort or convenience; we must work to earn our food, our clothing, our shelter; and to supply every indigency of accommodations, which our nature doth crave.

To it God hath annexed the best and most desirable rewards; success to our undertakings, wealth, honour, wisdom, virtue, salvation; all which, as they flow from God's bounty, and depend on his blessing; so from them they are usually conveyed to us through our industry, as the ordinary channel and instrument of attaining them.

It is requisite to us, even for procuring ease, and preventing a necessity of immoderate labour.

It is in itself sweet and satisfactory; as freeing our mind from distraction, and wrecking irresolution; as feeding us with good hope, and yielding a foretaste of its good fruits.

It furnisheth us with courage to attempt, and resolution to achieve things needful, worthy of us, and profitable to us.

It is attended with a good conscience, and cheerful reflections, of having well spent our time, and employed our talents to good advantage.

It sweeteneth our enjoyments, and seasoneth our attainments with a delightful relish.

It is the guard of innocence, and barreth out temptations to vice, to wantonness, to vain curiosity, and pragmaticalness.

It argueth an ingenuous and generous disposition of soul; aspiring to worthy things, and pursuing them in the fairest way; disdaining to enjoy the common benefits, or the fruits of other men's labour, without deserving them from the world, and requiting it for them.

It is necessary for every condition and station, for every calling, for every relation; no man without it being able to deport himself well in any state, to manage any business, to discharge any sort of duty.

To it the world is indebted for all the culture which advanceth it above rude and sordid barbarism; for whatever in common life is stately, or comely, or

* Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί. Solicitudine non pigri.—*Vulg.*

[y] James i. 5.

[z] Δέησις ἐνεργουμένη.—James v. 16; Προσκαρτέρησις.—Eph. vi. 18; Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 23.

[a] Heb. xiii. 21.

useful, industry hath contrived it, industry hath composed and framed it.

It is recommended to us by all sorts of patterns considerable; for all nature is continually busy and active in tendency toward its proper designs; heaven and earth do work in incessant motion; every living creature is employed in progging for its sustenance; the blessed spirits are always on the wing in despatching the commands of God, and ministering succour to us; God himself is ever watchful, and ever busy in preserving the world, and providing for the needs of every creature.

The lives of our blessed Saviour, of all the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints, in this respect have been more exemplary; no virtue being more conspicuous in their practice than industry in performing the hard duties and painful tasks imposed on them for the service of God, and the benefit of mankind.

Such is the virtue upon which I have formerly discoursed in general and at large; but shall now more specially consider, according to St. Paul's prescription, in reference to its most proper matter, *business*, explaining and pressing it accordingly.

Be not *slothful in business* (that is, in discharge of it), or *to business* (that is, to undertake it:) this is the rule; the nature and needfulness whereof we shall declare.

By *σπουδή*, *business*, we may understand any object of our care and endeavours which doth require them, and may deserve them; which by reason of its difficulty cannot well be accomplished or attained without them; and which is productive of some fruit or recompense answerable to them; the which hath *operæ causam*, a need of labour, and *operæ pretum*, some effect worth our pains: if it be not such, it is not a due matter of virtuous and laudable industry.

There are many things about which men with great earnestness employ themselves, called business, but not deserving that name: there are divers spurious kinds of industry, which may not pretend to commendation, but rather do merit blame; according to that of St. Chrysostom, *Labour which hath no profit cannot obtain any praise.**

There is a *κενοσπουδία*, a vain industry, and a *κακοσπουδία*, a naughty industry, both agreeing with genuine virtuous industry in the act, as implying careful and painful activity, but discording from it in object and design; and consequently in worth and moral esteem.

Aliud agere, to be impertinently busy, doing that which conduceth to no good purpose, is in some respect worse than to do nothing, or to forbear all action; for it is a positive abuse of our faculties, and trifling with God's gifts;† it is a throwing away labour and care, things valuable in themselves; it is often a running out of the way, which is worse than standing still; it is a debasing our reason, and declining from our manhood, nothing being more foolish or childish than to be solicitous and serious about trifles: for who are more busy and active than children? who are fuller of thoughts and designs, or more eager in prosecution of them, than they? But all is about ridiculous toys, the shadows of business, suggested to them by apish curiosity and imitation. Of such industry we may understand that of the Preacher, *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them*;[a] for that a man soon will be weary of that labour, which yieldeth no profit or beneficial return.

But there is another industry worse than that, when men are very busy in devising and compassing mischiefs; an industry whereof the Devil affordeth a great instance;[b] for the cursed fiend is very diligent, ever watching for occasions to supplant us, ever plotting methods and

* Πόνος οὐδὲν κέρδος ἔχων, ἐγκωμίου παντὸς ἀπεστέρηται.—Chrysost. tom. v. Orat. 64.

† Ἄλλῳ γὰρ οὐδενὶ φιλοπόνου τὸν κενόσπουδον ὁρίζομεν ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις ὄντα πολλάκις, ἢ τῷ τὸν μὲν εἰς ἀνωφελῆ πονεῖν, καὶ ἀδιαφόρως, τὸν δὲ ἕνεκά του τῶν συμφερόντων καὶ λυσιτελῶν·—Plut. de Commun. Not. p. 1949, edit. Steph.

Σπουδάζειν καὶ πονεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν ἠλίθιον φαίνεται καὶ λίαν παιδικόν.—Arist. Eth. x. 6.

Ἡ ἐπὶ μικροῖς σπουδὴ μέμψιν φέρει.—Plut. ibid. *Vide* de Glor. Ath. p. 621.

Οἱ σπουδάζοντες ἐν τοῖς γελοίοις, ἐν τοῖς σπουδαίοις ἔσονται καταγέλαστοι.—Cat. Maj. apud Plut. in Apoph.

[a] Eccles. x. 15.

[b] Luke xxii. 31; 2 Cor. ii. 11.

means to do harm, ever driving on his mischievous designs with unwearied activity; *going to and fro in the earth; running about as a roaring lion*, looking for prey, and *seeking whom he may devour.*[c]

And his wicked brood are commonly like him, *being workers of iniquity*,* οἱ πονηροί, *painful men*,* οἱ πανοῦργοι, men that will do all things; who will spare no pains, nor leave any stone unturned, for satisfying their lusts, and accomplishing their bad designs.

So indeed it is, that as no great good, so neither can any great mischief be effected without much pains; and if we consider either the characters or the practices of those, who have been famous mischief-doers, the pests of mankind and disturbers of the world, we shall find them to have been no sluggards.†

These two sorts of vain and bad industry the prophet Isaiah seemeth to describe in those words: *They hatch cockatrice's eggs, and weave the spiders web;*[e] of which expressions one may denote mischievous, the other frivolous diligence in contrivance or execution of naughty or vain designs; and to them both that of the prophet Hosea may be referred: *They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind;* guilt, remorse, and punishment being the consequences of both.[f] And of them both common experience doth afford very frequent and obvious instances, a great part of human life being taken up with them. For

How assiduously intent and eager may we observe men to be at sport! how soon will they rise to go forth to them! with what constancy and patience will they toil in them all the day! How indefatigable are they in riding and running about after a dog or a hawk, to catch a poor beast or silly bird!

How long will men sit poring on their games, dispensing with their food and sleep for it![‡]

How long and serious attention will men yield to a wanton play! how many hours will they contentedly sit thereat! What study will men employ on jests and impertinent wit! How earnest will they be to satisfy their vain curiosty!

How in such cases do men forget what they are doing, that sport should be sport,* not work; to divert and relax us, not to employ and busy us; to take off our minds a little, not wholly to take them up; not to exhaust or tire our spirits, but to refresh and cheer them, that they may become more fit for grave and serious occupations!

How painful will others be *in hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water;*[g] that is, in immoderate pursuit of worldly designs! How studiously will they plod, how restlessly will they trudge, what carking and drudgery will they endure in driving on projects of ambition and avarice! What will not they gladly do or suffer to get a little preferment, or a little profit! It was a common practice of old, and sure the world is not greatly mended since the Psalmist did thus reflect, *Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.*[h]

How many vigilant and stout pursuers are there of sensuality and riotous excess! such as those of whom the prophet speaketh, *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them.*[i]

How busy (O shame! O misery! how fiercely busy) are some in accomplishing designs of malice and revenge! How intent are some to over-reach, to circumvent, to supplant their neighbour! How sore pains will some take to seduce, corrupt, or debauch others! How active will some be in sowing strifes, in raising factions, in fomenting disorders in the world! How many industrious slaves hath the Devil,† who will spare no pains about any kind of work which he putteth them to! How many like those of whom the Wise Man saith, *Their feet run to*

* Ἐργάται τῆς ἀδικίας. Luke xiii. 27.
† Catiline, Marius, Sulleo, Cæsar, &c.
‡ Συντείρουσι γὰρ οἱ φιλόκυβοι νύκτας ἡμέραις ἄσιτοι καὶ ἄποτοι, καὶ ἡδονῆς ἡδονὴ περίεστι. — Lib. Orat. 31.
[c] Job i. 7; 1 Pet. v. 8. [d] Psal. vi. 8.
[e] Isa. lix. 5.
[f] Hos. viii. 7; Eccles. xxxiv. 2; Prov. xxii. 8; Hos. x. 13.

* Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι παίζοντα δεῖ παίζειν.—Plut.
† Ἐννοήσωμέν τινα ὁ διάβολος ἐπίταξε, πῶς ἐπιπονα, πῶς ἐμίμοχθα, &c. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. 16.
[g] Jer. ii. 18. [h] Psal. xxxix. 6.
[i] Isa. v. 11.

evil, and are *swift in running to mischief: they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall!*[j]

Now with all these labourers we may well expostulate in the words of the prophet: *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?*[k]

Such labours are unworthy of men, much less do they beseem Christians.

It becometh us not as rational creatures to employ the excellent gifts of our nature, and noble faculties of our high-born soul, the forces of our mind, the advantages of our fortune, our precious time, our very care and labour, vainly or unprofitably upon any thing base or mean: being that our reason is capable of achieving great and worthy things, we much debase it by stooping to regard toys; we do extremely abuse it by working mischief.

Much more doth it misbecome us as Christians (that is, persons devoted to so high a calling, who have so worthy employments assigned to us, so glorious hopes, so rich encouragements proposed to us for our work) to spend our thoughts and endeavours on things impertinent to our great design, or mainly thwarting it.[l]

The proper matter and object of our industry (those false ones being excluded) is true business; or that which is incumbent on a man to do, either in way of duty, being required by God, or by dictates of reason, as conducing to some good purpose; so that in effect it will turn to account, and finally in advantageous return will pay him for his labour of mind or body; that which the Wise Man did intend, when he advised, *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might:*[m] whatever thy hand findeth, that is, whatever by divine appointment (by the command or providence of God), or which, upon rational deliberation, doth occur as matter of our action; comprising every good purpose and reasonable undertaking incident to us.

But our business, according to the holy apostle's intent, may be supposed especially to be the work of our calling; to which each man hath a peculiar obligation; and which therefore is most properly his business, or ἡ ὑπουδὴ, emphatically, the business allotted to him.

Now this business, our calling, is double; our general calling, which is common to us all as Christians, and our particular calling, which peculiarly belongeth to us, as placed in a certain station, either in the church or state. In both which vocations, that we are much obliged and concerned to be industrious, shall be now my business to declare.

I. As to our general calling (that *sublime*, that *heavenly*, that *holy* vocation,*) in which by divine grace, according to the evangelical dispensations, we are engaged, that necessarily requireth and most highly deserved from us a great measure of industry; the nature and design of it requireth, the fruit and result of it deserveth, our utmost diligence; all sloth is inconsistent with discharging the duties, with enjoying the hopes, with obtaining the benefits thereof. For

It is a state of continual work, and is expressed in terms importing abundant, incessant, intense care and pain; for to be indeed Christians, we must *work out our salvation with fear and trembling;*[n] we must *by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.*[o] We must *walk worthy of the Lord, to all wellpleasing, being fruitful in every good work.* We must *be rich in good works*, and *filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good work, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*[p]

We have a soul to save, and *are appointed εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας, to make an acquist of salvation.*[q]

We have a mind to improve with virtue and wisdom, qualifying us for entrance into heaven, for enjoyment of God's favour, for conversation with angels.

* Ἡ ἄνω κλῆσις, Phil. iii. 14.—Κλῆσις ἐπουράνιος, Heb. iii. 1.—Ἁγία κλῆσις, 2 Tim. i. 9; (Eph. i. 18; 2 Thess. i. 11.)

j Prov. i. 16; vi. 18; iv. 16.
k Isa. lv. 2.
l Eph. i. 18.
m Eccles. ix. 10.
n Phil. ii. 12.
o Rom. ii. 7.
p Col. i. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 18; Phil. i. 11; (John xv. 5, 8, 16; James iii. 17;) Eph. ii. 10.
q 1 Thess. v. 9.

As Christians we are assumed to be servants of God, and re-admitted into his family, from which for our disloyalty we had been discarded; so that as he was our natural Lord, so he is now such also by special grace; who did make us, who doth maintain us, under whose protection and at whose disposal we subsist; whence we are obliged to be faithfully diligent in his service: we must constantly wait upon him in devotional addresses; we must carefully study to know his pleasure; we must endeavour exactly to perform his will, and obey his commands;[s] we must strive to advance his glory, to promote his interest, to improve all talents and advantages committed to us for those purposes; we must, as St. Paul expresseth it, *always abound in the work of the Lord.*[t]

We must also look upon ourselves as servants of Christ our Redeemer; who by his blood hath purchased us to himself, that we might be *zealous of good works*;[u] performing a service to him, which consisteth in a faithful discharge of manifold duties, and in pursuance of all virtue; with most intent application of mind, with expedite promptitude, with accurate circumspection; *giving all diligence* (as St. Peter speaketh) in *adding* one virtue to another;[v] *being ready* (as St. Paul saith) *to every good work*;[w] and *seeing that we walk circumspectly*,[x] or behave ourselves exactly according to the rules of duty in all our conversation.

This service requireth of us assiduous attendance on works of piety and devotion; that we do *incessantly watch to prayer*, that we *always give thanks*, that we *continually do offer up the sacrifice of praise to God.*[y]

It demandeth from us a continual *labour of charity*; that we *serve one another in love*; that we should, as *we have opportunity, work good to all men*; that we should *always pursue good toward one another, and toward all men.*[z]

It obligeth us *with all our powers to pursue peace with all men* (which, considering our natural peevishness, pride, and perverseness, is often no easy task), and that we do σπουδάζειν, *studiously endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*[a]

It chargeth on us contentedly and patiently to undergo whatever God doth impose of burden or sufferance, so that *patience have its perfect work*;[b] and it is a crabbed work to bend our stiff inclinations, to quell our refractory passions, to make our sturdy humour buckle thereto.

It doth exact that we should govern and regulate according to very strict and severe laws all the faculties of our soul, all the members of our body, all internal motions, and all external actions proceeding from us; that we should check our inclinations, curb our appetites, and compose our passions; that we should guard our hearts from vain thoughts and bad desires: that we should bridle our tongues from evil and from idle discourses; that we should order our steps in the straight way of righteousness, not deflecting to the right hand or to the left.

In the discharge of this service, how many rough difficulties are there to be surmounted, how many great obstacles to be removed, how many stout oppositions to be encountered, how many potent enemies to be vanquished, how many sore hardships, crosses, and tribulations to be endured!

How shrewd a task must we find it to circumcise our hearts, to mortify our earthly members, to crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts, to pull out our right eyes, and cut off our right hands, to renounce our worldly interests, to hate our nearest relations, to take up and bear our cross, whenever conscience and duty shall call us thereto!

Our calling, therefore, doth require great industry; and the business of it consequently is well represented by those performances which demand the greatest intention and laborious activity: it is

[r] 1 Thess. i. 9; Rom. vii. 6, vi. 22, Eph. ii. 19.
[s] Eph. v. 10; Rom. xii. 2; Luke xi. 28; Matt. xxv. 27.
[t] 1 Cor. xv. 58.
[u] Col. iii. 24; Eph. vi. 7; 1 Cor. vii. 23; vi. 20; Tit. ii. 14.
[v] 2 Pet. i. 5.—Σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες.
[w] Tit. iii. 1.
[x] Eph. v. 15.—Βλέπετε πῶς ἀκριβῶς ——
[y] Col. iv. 2; Eph. vi. 18; Rom. xii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 17; Luke xviii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 18; Eph. v. 20; Col. iii. 17; Heb. xiii. 15.
[z] 1 Thess. i. 3, Κόπος τῆς ἀγάπης.—Gal. v. 13, Δουλεύοντες.—Gal. vi. 10, Ἐργαζώμεθα.—1 Thess. v. 15.
[a] Rom. xii. 18, Εἰ δυνατὸν.—Heb. xii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Eph. iv. 3.
[b] James i. 4.

styled *exercise* (agonistic and ascetic exercise; γύμναζε σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, *Exercise thyself to Godliness;* and ἐν τούτῳ δὲ αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ, *Herein I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men;*) *wrestling* (ἡμῶν ἡ πάλη, *our wrestling is not* only *against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers;*) *running a race* (*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: So run that ye may obtain: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling;*) *a warfare, a combating* (*War a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience: Fight the good fight: Thou therefore endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ: Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;*) offering *violence* (*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;*) *watching* (*Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober: Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*[d])

Hence the precepts importing the general tenor of Christian practice are usually couched in terms implying great sedulity and contention of soul: Ἀγωνίζεσθε, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest: Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end. Wherefore, brethren, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.*[e]

Such is the work of our general calling, and so much industry it challengeth from us; with great reason indeed, for that such work is needful to our happiness, and that our labour will certainly be rewarded therewith.

[c] 1 Tim. iv. 7; Acts xxiv. 16; Heb. xii. 11; Eph. vi. 12; Heb. xii. 1; 1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7; 1 Tim. i. 18, 19.

[d] 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 25; Matt. xi. 12; 1 Thess. v. 6; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; Matt. xxvi. 41; xxiv. 42; Luke xii. 37; 1 Pet. v. 8; Apoc. iii. 2; xvi. 15.

[e] Luke xiii. 24; Σπουδάσωμεν, Heb. iv. 11; Ἐργάζεσθε, John vi. 27; Σπουδάσατε, 2 Pet. i. 10; 1 Pet. i. 13; Luke xii. 35; Eph. vi. 14; 2 Pet. iii. 14.

The work indeed of itself is most worthy to employ us, doth most become us, doth much adorn us, doth best befit our divine extraction and large capacity; is the noblest, the handsomest, the sweetest employment that could take us up; but we have also the greatest inducements and encouragements possible for our industry therein.[f]

There are, by the divine bounty and mercy, wages assigned abundantly correspondent to our work, yea, infinitely surpassing it; there is πολὺς μισθὸς, *a great* (or a manifold) *hire*[g] for our slender and simple performances; there are several noble prizes highly worth our striving for with our utmost strength and contention of soul.

In recompence thereof, we shall assuredly gain, even here in this transitory state, the special favour and love of God, with his constant protection and care for our good;* his faithful direction and friendly assistance to guide us and uphold us in all our ways, to bless and prosper our undertakings, to supply us in our needs, and comfort us in our distresses; so that we shall *lack nothing* that is good, that no *evil shall happen to us*, that *all things* shall concur and *co-operate for our benefit.*[h]

We shall thereby taste the satisfactions of a calm mind and a sound conscience, quickened by the consolations of the divine Spirit; *the peace of God ruling in our hearts, which passeth all understanding.*[i]

We shall afterward, when this moment is passed over, and our short day's work despatched, receive from God's bountiful hand an unconceivable affluence of good things, an eternal permanence of life; undisturbed rest, *indefectible wealth*, ineffable joy, incorruptible glory, *a kingdom unshakable.*[j]

He (saith our Lord) *that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting.*[k]

* Rom. xiv. 18.—He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

[f] John iv. 36. [g] Matt. v. 12.

[h] Psal. xxxiv. 9; lxxxiv. 11; xxxiii. 19; xxxvii. 3, 19; xci. 10; Prov. xii. 21; Rom. viii. 38.

[i] Col. iii. 15; Phil. iv. 7.

[j] James i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 25.

[k] John iv. 36.

To them (saith St. Paul) *who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, God in recompense will bestow eternal life.*[l] And, *I have* (saith that blessed labourer of himself) *fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*[m]

What more effectual spur or incentive can there be to industry in this business, than to consider that which St. Paul so often doth inculcate: *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same* (a recompense for the same) *he shall receive of the Lord;* and *knowing that* (in consideration of our service done to the Lord) *of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance?*[n]

What exhortation can be more firmly grounded, or strongly backed, than is that of the apostle: *Therefore, my brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord?*[o]

May it not also much encourage us to industry, to be assured, that not only the kind of our work, but the degree of our labour, shall be considered and requited in just proportion; so that the harder we work, the higher we shall be rewarded; for *to each one*[p] (saith our Lord) *the Son of man shall render a reward,* κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ, *according to his performance. Every one* (saith St. Paul) *shall receive* ἴδιον μισθὸν κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, *his proper reward according to his proper work;* whence we have reason to observe St. John's advice, *Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward.*[q]

To be negligent or slothful in such a case, for want of a little care and pains to forfeit such advantages, what a pity, what a folly is it! Were an opportunity presented, by a little minding our business, and bestirring ourselves, to procure a fair estate, or a good preferment, would not he be deemed mad or sottish, who should sit still, and forego that his advantage? How much more wildness is it to be drowsy and sluggish in this case, thereby losing eternal bliss and glory! Well, therefore, might the apostle say, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*[r] How shall we escape, not only the sin and guilt of basest ingratitude toward him that graciously doth offer it, but the imputation of most wretched folly, in being so much wanting to our own interest and welfare?

Is it not a sad thing, a woful shame, to observe what pains men will throw away upon things of small or no concernment to them? yea, what toil and drudgery they will sustain in the service of Satan, in pursuit of sin, in the gratification of their vanities and lusts?

What pains will a covetous wretch take in scraping for pelf! how will he rack his mind with carking solicitude to get, to keep, to spare it! How will he tire his spirits with restless travail! how will he pinch his carcass for want of what nature craveth! What infamy and obloquy will he endure for his niggardly parsimony and sordidness!

How much labour will an ambitious fop undergo for preferment or vain honour! To how many tedious attendances, to how pitiful servilities will he submit! what sore crosses and disappointments will he swallow! what affronts and indignities will he patiently digest, without desisting from his enterprise!

How will a man, as St. Paul observed, πάντα ἐγκρατεύεσθαι, endure all painful abstinence and continence, in order to the obtaining a *corruptible crown,*[s] a fading garland of bays, a puff of vain applause!

What diligence will men use to compass the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures! how watchful in catching opportunities, how eager in quest of them will they be! What difficulties will they undertake, what hazards will they incur, what damages and inconveniences will they sustain, rather than fail of satisfying their desires!

What achings of head and heart; what pangs of mind, and gripes of conscience; what anxieties of regret and fear, will every worker of iniquity undergo! So faith-

[l] Ἀποδώσει,—Rom. ii. 6, 7.
[m] 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.
[n] Eph. vi. 8; 2 Cor. v. 10; Col. iii. 24.
[o] 1 Cor. xv. 58.
[p] Ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ,—Matt. xvi. 27.
[q] 1 Cor. iii. 8; Rev. xxii. 12; ii. 23; Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xix. 12; Μισθὸν πληρη ἀπολάβητε, —2 John 8.
[r] Heb. ii. 3.
[s] 1 Cor. ix. 25.

ful friends hath this vain and evil world; so diligent servants hath the accursed lord thereof; so careful and laborious will men be to destroy and damn themselves. O that we could be willing to spend as much care and pains in the service of our God! O that we were as true friends of ourselves![t] O that we could be as industrious for our salvation! that is, in the business of our general calling! which having considered, let us proceed to the other business belonging to us, which is,

II. The business of our particular calling; that in reference whereto St. Paul doth prescribe, *Every man as the Lord hath called him, so let him walk. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called*:[u] let him so abide, as faithfully to prosecute the work, and discharge the duty of it; the doing which otherwhere he termeth πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *to do our own business*, (*working with our hands*), and enjoineth it in opposition to those two great pests of life, sloth and pragmatical curiosity;[v] or the neglect of our own, and meddling with other men's affairs.

This the apostle nameth *our calling*, because we are called or appointed thereto by divine Providence; for he supposeth and taketh it for granted, that to each man in this world God hath assigned a certain station, unto which peculiar action is suited; in which station he biddeth him quietly to abide, till Providence fairly doth translate him, and during his abode therein diligently to execute the work thereof.[w]

Every man is a member of a double body; of the civil commonwealth, and of the Christian church: in relation to the latter whereof, St. Paul telleth us (and what he saith by parity of reason may be referred likewise to the former), that *God hath set the members of every one in the body, as it pleaseth him*;[x] and as it is the natural, so it is in every political and spiritual body, every member hath its proper use and function: *All members* (saith St. Paul) *have not* τὴν αὐτὴν πρᾶξιν, *the same office*,[y] or the same work and operation; yet every one hath some work. There is no member designed to be idle or useless, conferring no benefit to the whole; but *the whole body* (saith the apostle) *fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love*:[z] each member doth conspire and co-operate to the strength, nourishment, thriving, and welfare of the whole.

Every man (who continueth a man, in his senses, or in any good degree of natural integrity) is by God endowed with competent abilities to discharge some function useful to common good, or at least needful to his own sustenance;[a] to every one some talent is committed, which in subordination to God's service he may improve, to the benefit of the world, God's temporal, or of the church, God's spiritual kingdom.

It is plainly necessary, that the greatest part of men should have a determinate work allotted to them, that they may support their life and get their food, without being injurious, offensive, or burdensome to others; for their living they must either follow some trade, or they must shark and filch, or they must beg, or they must starve.

And the rest are obliged to do somewhat conducible to public good, that they may deserve to live; for a drone should not be among the bees, nor hath right to devour the honey. If any man doth pretend, or presume, that he hath nothing to do but to eat, to sleep, to play, to laugh, to enjoy his ease, his pleasure, his humour, he thereby doth as it were disclaim a reasonable title of living among men, and sharing in the fruits of their industry; he, in St. Paul's judgment, should be debarred of food, for *this* (saith the holy apostle) *we command you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat.*[b]

Such an one in the body of men, what is he but an unnatural excrescence, sucking nutriment from it, without yielding ornament or use? What is he but a wen, deforming and encumbering the body; or a canker, infesting and corrupting it?

As no man (at least with decency, con-

[t] Chrys. ἀνδρ. ιθ.
[u] 1 Cor. vii. 17, 20.
[v] 1 Thess. iv. 11; Eph. iv. 28.
[w] 1 Cor. vii. 22.
[x] 1 Cor. xii. 18.
[y] Rom. xii. 4.
[z] Eph. iv. 16.
[a] Ἑκάστῳ ὡς ἐμέρισεν Θεός,—1 Cor. vii. 17.
[b] 2 Thess. iii. 10.

venience, and comfort) can live in the world without being obliged to divers other men for their help in providing accommodations for him; so justice and ingenuity, corroborated by divine sanctions, do require of him, that in commutation he, one way or other, should undertake some pains redounding to the benefit of others.

So hath the great author of order distributed the ranks and offices of men in order to mutual benefit and comfort, that one man should plough, another thrash, another grind, another labour at the forge, another knit or weave, another sail, another trade, another supervise all these, labouring to keep them all in order and peace; that one should work with his hands and feet, another with his head and tongue; all conspiring to one common end, the welfare of the whole, and the supply of what is useful to each particular member; every man so reciprocally obliging and being obliged; the prince being obliged to the husbandman for his bread, to the weaver for his clothes, to the mason for his palace, to the smith for his sword; those being all obliged to him for his vigilant care in protecting them, for their security in pursuing the work, and enjoying the fruit of their industry.

So every man hath a calling and proper business; whereto that industry is required, I need not much to prove, the thing itself in reason and experience being so clearly evident: for what business can be well despatched, what success can be expected to any undertaking, in what calling can any man thrive, without industry? What business is there that will go on of itself, or proceed to any good issue, if we do not carefully look to it, steadily hold it in its course, constantly push and drive it forward? It is true, as in nature, so in all affairs, *Nihil movet non motum*, nothing moveth without being moved.

Our own interest should move us to be industrious in our calling, that we may obtain the good effects of being so in a comfortable and creditable subsistence; that we may not suffer the damages and wants, the disappointments and disgraces ensuing on sloth: but the chief motive should be from piety and conscience; for that it is a duty which we owe to God. For God having placed us in our station, he having apportioned to us our task, we being in transaction of our business his servants, we do owe to him that necessary property of good servants, without which fidelity cannot subsist;[c] for how can he be looked on as a faithful servant, who doth not effectually perform the work charged on him, or diligently execute the orders of his master?

St. Paul doth enjoin servants, that they should *in all things obey their masters*,[d] with conscientious regard to God, as therein performing service to God, and expecting recompense from him: and of princes he saith, that they, in dispensation of justice, enacting laws, imposing taxes, and all political administrations, are *the ministers of God*, προσκαρτεροῦντες, *attending constantly upon this very thing*:[e] and if these extremes, the highest and lowest of all vocations, are services of God; if the highest upon that score be tied to so much diligence, then surely all middle places, upon the same account of conscience toward God, do exact no less.

If he that hath one talent, and he that hath ten, must both improve them for God's interest; then he that hath two, or three, or more, is obliged to the same duty proportionably.

Every one should consider the world as the family of that great Paterfamilias, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*,[f] and himself as an officer or servant therein, by God's will and designation constituted in that employment into which Providence hath cast him; to confer, in his order and way, somewhat toward a provision for the maintenance of himself and of his fellow-servants. Of a superior officer our Lord saith, *Who is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season?*[g] So the greatest men are as stewards, treasurers, comptrollers, or purveyors; the rest are inferior servants, in their proper rank and capacity.

And he that with diligence performeth his respective duty (be it high and honourable, or mean and contemptible in outward appearance) will please God, as

[c] 1 Cor. iv. 2.
[d] Col. iii. 22; Eph. vi. 5; 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23.
[e] Rom. xiii. 6.
[f] Eph. iii. 15.
[g] Matt. xxiv. 45; Luke xii. 42.

keeping good order, and as being useful to his service; so that, upon the reckoning, God will say unto him, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[h] But he that doeth otherwise (behaving himself carelessly or sluggishly in his business) will offend God, as committing disorder, and as being unprofitable.

He committeth disorder, according to that of St. Paul: *We hear there are some, which walk among you disorderly, not working at all.*[i] His sentence and doom will be, according to our Lord, *O thou wicked and slothful servant — Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darknese*;[j] which words are spoken in relation to one who being a flatterer, or sluggard in his calling, did not improve the special talent intrusted with him for God's service.

In fine, if we are conscientiously industrious in our vocation, we shall assuredly find the blessing of God thereon; and that he thereby will convey good success, comfort, competent wealth, a fair reputation, all desirable good unto us; for as all these things are promised to industry, so the promise especially doth belong to that industry, which a man doth exercise in an orderly course of action in his own way; or rather in God's way, wherein divine Providence hath set him.

An irregular or impertinent laboriousness, out of a man's calling or sphere; a being diligent in other men's affairs, invading their office (as if I a priest will be trading, a layman preaching), may not claim the benefit of those promises, or the blessings of industry: but a husbandman, who, with conscientious regard to God, and confidence in him, is painful in tilling his ground, may expect a good crop;[k] a merchant, who (upon the same principle, with the like disposition) earnestly followeth his trade, may hope for safe voyages and good markets; a prince carefully minding his affairs may look for peace and prosperity to his country; a scholar studying hard may be well assured of getting knowledge, and finding truth; all, who with honest diligence constantly do pursue their business, may confidently and cheerfully hope to reap the advantages suitable to it from the favourable blessing of God. So that we have all reason to observe the apostle's precept, *Not to be slothful in business.*

I should apply this doctrine to our own case, urging its practice by considerations peculiar to our vocation: but having already passed the bounds of time, I reserve the doing it to another opportunity.

Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and make you pefect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight,[l] through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

[h] 1 Cor. xiv, 33; Matt. xxv. 21.
[i] 2 Thess. iii. 11. [j] Matt. xxv. 26, 30.
[k] Prov. x. 4; xiii. 11.

SERMON LIII.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING, AS GENTLEMEN.

ROM. xii. 11.—*Not slothful in business.*

I HAVE largely treated upon the duty recommended in this precept, and urged the observance of it in general, at a distance: I now intend more particularly and closely to apply it, in reference to those persons who seem more especially obliged to it, and whose observing it may prove of greatest consequence to public good; the which application may also be most suitable and profitable to this audience. Those persons are of two sorts; the one gentlemen, the other scholars.

I. The first place, as civility demandeth, we assign to gentlemen, or persons of eminent rank in the world, well allied, graced with honour, and furnished with wealth: the which sort of persons I conceive in a high degree obliged to exercise industry in buisness.

This at first hearing may seem a little paradoxical and strange; for who have less buisness than gentlemen? who do need less industry than they? He that hath a fair estate, and can live on his means, what hath he to do? what labour or trouble can be exacted of him? what hath he to think on, or trouble his head with, but how to invent recreations and pastimes to divert himself, and spend his

[l] 1 Thess. v. 23; Heb. xiii. 20.

waste leisure pleasantly? Why should not he be allowed to enjoy himself, and the benefits which nature or fortune hath freely dispensed to him, as he thinketh best, without offence? Why may he not say with the rich man in the gospel, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?*[a] Is it not often said by the Wise Man, that there is *nothing better under the sun, than that a man should make his soul to enjoy good* in a cheerful and comfortable fruition of his estate?[b] According to the passable notion and definition, *What is a gentlemen but his pleasure?*

If this be true, if a gentleman be nothing else but this, then truly he is a sad piece, the most inconsiderable, the most despicable, the most pitiful and wretched creature in the world: if it is his privilege to do nothing, it is his privliege to be most unhappy; and to be so will be his fate, if he live according to it: for he that is of no worth or use, who produceth no beneficial fruit, who performeth no service to God or to the world, what title can he have to happiness? what capacity thereof? what reward can he claim? what comfort can he feel? To what temptations is he exposed! what guilts will he incur!

But in truth it is far otherwise: to suppose that a gentleman is loose from business is a great mistake; for indeed no man hath more to do, no man lieth under greater engagements to industry than he.

He is deeply obliged to be continually busy in more ways than other men, who have but one simple calling or occupation allotted to them; and that upon a triple account; in respect to God, to the world, and to himself.

1. He is first obliged to continual employment in respect to God.

He, out of a grateful regard to divine bounty for the eminency of his station, adorned with dignity and repute, for the plentiful accommodations and comforts of his life, for his exemption from those pinching wants, those meaner cares, those sordid entertainments, and those toilsome drudgeries, to which other men are subject, is bound to be more diligent in God's service, employing all the advantages of his state to the glory of his munificent Benefactor, to whose good providence alone he doth owe them; for *who maketh him to differ* from another? and, *what hath he that he did not receive* from God's free bounty?[c]

In proportion to the bulk of his fortune, his heart should be enlarged with a thankful sense of God's goodness to him; his mouth should ever be filled with acknowledgment and praise; he should always be ready to express his grateful resentment of so great and peculiar obligations.

He should dedicate larger portions of that free leisure which God hath granted to him, in waiting upon God, and constant performances of devotion.

He, in frequently reflecting on the particular ample favours of God to him, should imitate the holy Psalmist, that illustrious pattern of great and fortunate men; saying after him, with his spirit and disposition of soul; *Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side; therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God.*[d]

Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou hast set my feet in a large room: Thou preparest a table before me:—Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over;—to the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent; The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I have a goodly heritage; therefore *I will bless the Lord.*[e]

In conceiving such meditations, his head and his heart should constantly be employed; as also in contriving ways of declaring and discharging real gratitude; asking himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?*[f] What shall I render to him, not only as a man, for all the gifts of nature; as a Christian, for all the blessings of grace; but as a gentleman also, for the many advantages of this my condition, beyond so many of my brethren, by special providence indulged to me?

[a] Luke xii. 19.
[b] Eccles. ii. 24; iii. 22; v. 18; viii. 15.
[c] 1 Cor. iv. 7.
[d] Psal. lxxi. 21.
[e] Psal. xxx. 7; xxxi. 8; xxiii. 5; xxx. 12; xvi. 5, 6, 7.
[f] Psal. cxvi. 12.

He hath all the common duties of piety, of charity, of sobriety, to discharge with fidelity; for being a gentleman doth not exempt him from being a Christian, but rather more strictly doth engage him to be such in a higher degree than others; it is an obligation peculiarly incumbent on him, in return for God's peculiar favours, to pay God all due obedience, and to exercise himself in all good works; disobedience being a more henious crime in him than in others, who have not such encouragements to serve God.

His obedience may be inculcated by those arguments which Joshua and Samuel did use in pressing it on the Israelites; *Only* (said Samuel) *fear the Lord, and serve him in truth; for consider how great things God hath done for you.* And, *I have given you* (saith God by Joshua) *a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not; and ye dwell in them: of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not, do ye eat. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.*[g]

His disodedience may be aggravated, as Nehemiah did that of the Isrealites: *They took strong cities and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vinyards and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance; so they did eat and were filled, and became fat; and delighted themselves in thy goodness: nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs—They have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness, which thou gavest them; neither turned they from their wicked works.*[h]

A gentleman hath more talents committed to him, and consequently more employment required of him: if a rustic labourer, or a mechanic artisan, hath one talent, a gentleman hath ten; he hath innate vigour of spirit, and height of courage fortified by use; he hath accomplishment and refinement of parts by liberal education; he hath the succours of parentage, alliance, and friendship; he hath wealth, he hath honour, he hath power and authority, he hath command of time and leisure; he hath so many precious and useful talents intrusted to him, not to be *wrapped up in a napkin* or *hidden under ground*;[i] not to be squandered away in private satisfactions, but for *negotiation*, to be put out to use, to be improved in the most advantageous way to God's service.[j] Every talent doth require a particular care and pains to manage it well.

He particularly is God's steward, intrusted with God's substance for the sustenance and supply of God's family; to relieve his fellow-servants in their need, upon seasonable occasions, by hospitality, mercy, and charitable beneficence; according to that intimation of our Lord, *Who is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion and meat in due season?*[k] And according to those apostolical precepts, *As every one hath received a gift* (or special favour), *even so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God:* and, *Charge the rich in this world,—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*[l]

And he that is obliged to purvey for so many, and so to abound in good works, how can he want business? how can he pretend to a *writ of ease*?

Surely that gentleman is very blind, and very barren of invention, who is to seek for work fit for him, or cannot easily discern many employments belonging to him, of great concern and consequence.

It is easy to prompt and show him many businesses, indispensably belonging to him, as such.

It is his business to minister relief to his poor neighbours, in their wants and distresses, by his wealth. It is his business to direct and advise the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted, to reclaim the wicked, and encourage the good, by his wisdom. It is his business to protect the weak, to rescue the oppressed, to ease those who groan under heavy burdens, by his power; to be such a gentleman, and so employed, as Job was; who *did*

[g] 1 Sam. xii. 24; Josh. xxiv. 13, 14.
[h] Nehem. ix. 25, &c.; (Isa. lxiii. 10; Psal. cvi. 6; Jer. ii. 7; Ezek. xvi. 7; 1 Sam. xv. 17; 2 Sam. xii. 7; 1 Kings xvi. 26.)
[i] Luke xix. 20; Matt. xxv. 25.
[j] Πραγματεύσασθε, Luke xix. 13; Ἐργάζεσθαι, Matt. xxv. 16, 27, 14.
[k] Παρὶδωκε τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ,—Luke xii. 42.
[l] Χάρισμα,—1 Pet. iv. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.

not eat his morsel alone, so that the fatherless did not eat thereof; who *did not withhold the poor from their desire, or cause the eyes of the widow to fail;* who *did not see any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;* who *delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.*[m]

It is his business to be hospitable; kind and helpful to strangers; following those noble gentlemen, Abraham and Lot, who were so ready to invite and entertain strangers with bountiful courtesy.[n]

It is his business to maintain peace, and appease dissensions among his neighbours, interposing his counsel and authority in order thereto: whereto he hath that brave gentleman, Moses, recommended for his pattern.[o]

It is his business to promote the welfare and prosperity of his country with his best endeavours, and by all his interest; in which practice the sacred history doth propound divers gallant gentlemen (Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah, Daniel, Mordecai, and all such renowned patriots) to guide him.[p]

It is his business to govern his family well; to educate his children in piety and virtue; to keep his servants in good order.[q]

It is his business to look to his estate, and to keep it from wasting; that he may sustain the repute of his person and quality with decency; that he may be furnished with ability to do good, may provide well for his family, may be hospitable, may have wherewith to help his brethren; for if, according to St. Paul's injunction, a man should *work with his own hands, that he may have somewhat to impart to him that needeth*,[r] then must he that hath an estate be careful to preserve it, for the same good purpose.

It is his business to cultivate his mind with knowledge, with generous dispositions, with all worthy accomplishments befitting his condition, and qualifying him for honourable action; so that he may excel, and bear himself above the vulgar level, no less in real inward worth, than in exterior garb; that he be not a gentleman merely in name or show.

It is his business (and that no slight or easy business) to eschew the vices, to check the passions, to withstand the temptations, to which his condition is liable;* taking heed that his wealth, honour, and power do not betray him unto pride, insolence, or contempt of his poorer brethren; unto injustice or oppression; unto luxury and riotous excess; unto sloth, stupidity, forgetfulness of God, and irreligious profaneness.

It is a business especially incumbent on him to be careful of his ways, that they may have good influence on others, who are apt to look upon him as their guide and pattern.

He should labour and study to be a leader unto virtue, and a notable promoter thereof; directing and exciting men thereto by his exemplary conversation; encouraging them by his countenance and authority; rewarding the goodness of meaner people by his bounty and favour: he should be such a gentleman as Noah, who *preached righteousness* by his words and works before a profane world.

Such particular affairs hath every person of quality, credit, wealth, and interest, allotted to him by God, and laid on him as duties; the which to discharge faithfully, will enough employ a man, and doth require industry, much care, much pains; excluding sloth and negligence: so that it is impossible for a sluggard to be a worthy gentlemen, virtuously disposed, a charitable neighbour, a good patriot, a good husband of his estate; any thing of that, to which God, by setting him in such a station, doth call him.

Thus is a gentleman obliged to industry in respect of God, who justly doth exact those labours of piety, charity, and all virtue, from him. Further,

2. He hath also obligations to mankind, demanding industry from him, upon accounts of common humanity, equity, and ingenuity; for

How can he fairly subsist upon the common industry of mankind, without

[m] Job xxxi. 17, 16, 19; xxix 12.
[n] 1 Pet. iv. 9; Heb. xiii. 2; Rom. xii. 13; Gen xviii. 1; xix. 1.
[o] Exod. ii. 13; Acts vii. 26.
[p] (Judges v. 9.)
[q] Josh. xxiv. 15; Psal. ci.
[r] Μεταδιδόναι,—Eph. iv. 28.

* Ardua nam res est opibus non tradere mores.

bearing a share thereof? How can he well satisfy himself to dwell statelily, to feed daintily, to be finely clad, to maintain a pompous retinue, merely upon the sweat and toil of others, without himself rendering a compensation, or making some competent returns of care and pain, redounding to the good of his neighbour?

How can he justly claim, or reasonably expect from the world, the respect agreeable to his rank, if he doth not by worthy performances conduce to the benefit of it? Can men be obliged to regard those, from whom they receive no good?

If no gentleman be tied to serve the public, or to yield help in sustaining the common burdens, and supplying the needs of mankind, then is the whole order merely a burden, and an offence to the world; a race of drones, a pack of ciphers, in the commonwealth, standing for nothing, deserving no consideration or regard: and if any are bound, then all are; for why should the whole burden lie on some, while others are exempted?

It is indeed supposed that all are bound thereto, seeing that all have recompenses publicly allowed to them upon such considerations; divers respects and privileges peculiar to the order, grounded upon this supposition, that they deserve such advantages by conferring notable benefit to the public; the which indeed it were an arrogance to seek, and an iniquity to accept, for doing nothing.

It is an insufferable pride for any man to pretend or conceit himself to differ so much from his brethren, that he may be allowed to live in ease and sloth, while the rest of mankind are subject to continual toil and trouble. Moreover,

3. A gentleman is bound to be industrious for his own sake; it is a duty which he oweth to himself, to his honour, to his interest, to his welfare. He cannot without industry continue like himself, or maintain the honour and repute becoming his quality and state, or secure himself from contempt and disgrace; for to be honourable and slothful are things inconsistent, seeing honour doth not grow, nor can subsist, without undertaking worthy designs, constantly pursuing them, and happily achieving them; it is the fruit and reward of such actions, which are not performed with ease.

External respect and a semblance of honour, for the sake of public order, may be due to an exterior rank or title: but to pay this, is not to honour the person, but his title; because it is supposed, that men of real worth and use do bear it; or lest, by refusing it to one, the whole order may seem disrespected: but yet true honour, or mental esteem, is not due upon such accounts; nor is it possible to render it unto any person, who doth not by worthy qualities and good deeds appear to merit it.

Nor can a gentleman without industry uphold his real interests against the attempts of envy, of treachery, of flattery, of sycophantry, of avarice, to which his condition is obnoxious: to preserve his wealth and estate, which are the supports of his quality, he must endure care and pains; otherwise he will by greedy harpies and crafty lurchers be rifled or cozened of his substance; it will of itself go to wreck, and be embezzled by negligence.

He cannot without industry guard his personal welfare from manifold inconveniences, molestations, and mischief; idleness itself will be very troublesome and irksome to him. His time will lie upon his hands, as a pestering incumbrance. His mind will be infested with various distractions and distempers; vain and sad thoughts, foul lusts, and unquiet passions will spring up therein, as weeds in a neglected soil. His body will languish and become destitute of health, of vigour, of activity, for want of due exercise. All the mischiefs, which naturally do spring from sloth and stupidity will seize upon him.

4. Thus, upon various accounts, a gentleman is engaged to business, and concerned to exercise industry therein: we may add, that indeed the very nature of gentility, or the true notion of a gentleman, doth imply so much.

For what, I pray, is a gentleman, what properties hath he, what qualities are characteristical or peculiar to him, whereby he is distinguished from others, and raised above the vulgar? Are they not especially two, courage and courtesy? which he that wanteth, is not otherwise than equivocally a gentleman, as an image or a carcass is a man; without which, gentility in a conspicuous degree is no more than a vain show or an empty

name: and these plainly do involve industry, do exclude slothfulness; for courage doth prompt boldly to undertake, and resolutely to despatch great enterprises and employments of difficulty: it is not seen in a flaunting garb, or strutting deportment; not in hectorly, ruffian-like swaggering or huffing; not in high looks or big words; but in stout and gallant deeds, employing vigour of mind and heart to achieve them: how can a man otherwise approve himself for courageous, than by signalizing himself in such a way?

And for courtesy, how otherwise can it be well displayed than in sedulous activity for the good of men? It surely doth not consist in modish forms of address, or complimental expressions, or hollow professions, commonly void of meaning or of sincerity; but in real performances of beneficence, when occasion doth invite, and in waiting for opportunities to do good; the which practice is accompanied with some care and pain, adding a price to it; for an easy courtesy is therefore small, because easy, and may be deemed to proceed rather from ordinary humanity, than from gentle disposition; so that, in fine, he alone doth appear truly a gentleman, who hath the heart to undergo hard tasks for public good, and willingly taketh pains to oblige his neighbours and friends.

5. The work indeed of gentlemen is not so gross, but it may be as smart and painful as any other. For all hard work is not manual; there are other instruments of action beside the plough, the spade, the hammer, the shuttle: nor doth every work produce sweat, and visible tiring of body: the head may work hard in contrivance of good design; the tongue may be very active in dispensing advice, persuasion, comfort, and edification in virtue; a man may bestir himself in *going about to do good*: these are works employing the cleanly industry of a gentleman.

6. In such works it was, that the truest and greatest pattern of gentility that ever was, did employ himself. Who was that? Even our Lord himself; for he had no particular trade or profession: no man can be more loose from any engagement to the world than he was; no man had less need of business or pains-taking than he; for he had a vast estate, being *heir of all things*, all the world being at his disposal; yea, infinitely more, it being in his power with a word to create whatever he would to serve his need or satisfy his pleasure; omnipotency being his treasure and supply; he had a retinue of angels to wait on him, and minister to him; whatever sufficiency any man can fancy to himself to dispense with his taking pains, that had he in a far higher degree:[3] yet did he find work for himself, and continually was employed in performing service to God, and imparting benefits to men; nor was ever industry exercised upon earth comparable to his.

Gentlemen, therefore, would do well to make him the pattern of their life, to whose industry they must be beholden for their salvation: in order whereto we recommend them to his grace.

SERMON LIV.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING, AS SCHOLARS.

ROM. xii. 11.—*Not slothful in business.*

I PROCEED to the other sort of persons, whom we did propound, namely,

II. Scholars; and that on them particularly great engagements do lie to be industrious, is most evident from various considerations.

The nature and design of this calling doth suppose industry; the matter and extent of it doth require industry; the worth of it doth highly deserve industry. We are, in special gratitude to God, in charity to men, in due regard to ourselves, bound unto it.

1. First, I say, the nature and design of our calling doth suppose industry: *There is* (saith the divine Preacher) *a man whose labour is in wisdom, in knowledge, and in equity.*[4] Such men are scholars; so that we are indeed no scholars, but absurd usurpers of the name, if we are not laborious; for what is a scholar, but one who retireth his person, and avocateth his mind from other occupations, and worldly entertainments, that he may *σχολάζειν*, *vacare studiis*, employ his mind and leisure on study and learn-

[3] Isa. liii. 11. [4] Eccles. ii. 21.

ing, in the search of truth, the quest of knowledge, the improvement of his reason. Wherefore an idle scholar, a lazy student, a sluggish man of learning, is nonsense.[b]

What is learning, but a diligent attendance to instruction of masters, skilled in any knowledge, and conveying their notions to us in word or writing?

What is study, but an earnest, steady, persevering application of mind to some matter, on which we fix our thoughts, with intent to see through it? What, in Solomon's language, are these scholastic occupations, but *inclining the ear*, and *applying our heart to understanding*?[c] than which commonly there is nothing more laborious, more straining nature, and more tiring our spirits; whence it is well compared to the most painful exercises of body and soul.

The Wise Man, advising men to seek wisdom, the which is the proper design of our calling, doth intimate that work to be like digging in the mines for silver, and like searching all about for concealed treasure; than which there can hardly be any more difficult and painful task: *If* (saith he) *thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand.*[d] Otherwhere he compareth the same work to assiduous watching and waiting, like that of a guard or a client, which are the greatest instances of diligence: *Blessed* (saith he, or Wisdom by him saith, Blessed) *is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*[e]

Wherefore, if we will approve ourselves to be what we are called, and what we pretend to be; if we will avoid being impostors, assuming a name not due to us, we must not be slothful. Further,

2. The matter and extent of our business doth require industry from us: the matter of it, which is truth and knowledge; the extent, which is very large and comprehensive, taking in all truth, all knowledge, worthy our study, and useful for the designs of it.

Our business is to find truth; the which, even in matters of high importance, is not easily to be discovered; being as a vein of silver, encompassed with earth and mixed with dross, deeply laid in the obscurity of things, wrapt up in false appearances, entangled with objections, and perplexed with debates; being therefore not readily discoverable, especially by minds clouded with prejudices, lusts, passions, partial affections, appetites of honour and interest; whence to descry it requireth the most curious observation and solicitous circumspection that can be; together with great pains in the preparation and purgation of our minds toward the inquiry of it.

Our business is to attain knowledge, not concerning obvious and vulgar matters, but about sublime, abstruse, intricate, and knotty subjects, remote from common observation and sense; to get sure and exact notions about which will try the best forces of our mind with their utmost endeavours; in firmly settling principles, in strictly deducing consequences, in orderly digesting conclusions, in faithfully retaining what we learn by our contemplation and study.

And if to get a competent knowledge about a few things, or to be reasonably skilful in any sort of learning, be difficult, how much industry doth it require to be well seen in many, or to have waded through the vast compass of learning, in no part whereof a scholar may conveniently or handsomely be ignorant; seeing there is such a connection of things, and dependence of notions, that one part of learning doth confer light to another, that a man can hardly well understand any thing without knowing divers other things; that he will be a lame scholar, who hath not an insight into many kinds of knowledge; that he can hardly be a good scholar who is not a general one.

To understand so many languages, which are the shells of knowledge; to comprehend so many sciences, full of various theorems and problems; to peruse so many histories of ancient and modern times; to know the world, both natural and human; to be acquainted with the various inventions, inquiries, opinions, and controversies of learned men; to skill the arts of expressing our mind, and imparting our conceptions with advantage, so as to instruct or persuade others; these are works indeed, which

[b] Ἡ σοφία γραμματέως ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς,—Eccl. xxxviii. 24.
[c] Prov. ii. 2.
[d] Prov. ii. 4, 5.
[e] Prov. viii. 34.

will exercise and strain all our faculties (our reason, our fancy, our memory) in painful study.

The knowledge of such things is not innate to us; it doth not of itself spring up in our minds; it is not any ways incident by chance, or infused by grace (except rarely by miracle;) common observation doth not produce it; it cannot be purchased at any rate, except by that, for which it was said of old, *the gods sell all things*,* that is for pains; without which, the best wit and greatest capacity may not render a man learned, as the best soil will not yield good fruit or grain, if they be not planted or sown therein.

Consider, if you please, what a scholar Solomon was: beside his skill in politics, which was his principal faculty and profession, whereby he did with admirable dexterity and prudence manage the affairs of that great kingdom, *judging his people, and discerning what was good and bad*,[f] accurately dispensing justice; settling his country in a most flourishing state of peace, order, plenty, and wealth; largely extending his territory; so that his wisdom of this kind was famous over the earth: beside, I say, this civil wisdom, he had an exquisite skill in natural philosophy and medicine; for *he spake of trees*, or plants, *from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.*[g]

He was well versed in mathematics; for it is said, *Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east-country, and all the wisdom of Egypt*;[h] the wisdom of which nations did consist in those sciences. And of his mechanic skill he left for a monument the most glorious structure that ever stood on earth.

He was very skilful in poetry and music; for he did himself *compose above a thousand songs*;[i] whereof one yet extant declareth the loftiness of his fancy, the richness of his vein, and the eleganey of his style.

He had great ability in rhetoric; according to that in Wisdom, *God granted me to speak as I would*; and that in Ecclesiastes, *The preacher sought to find out acceptable words*;[j] a great instance of which faculty we have in that admirable prayer of his composure at the dedication of the temple.

He did wonderfully excel in ethics; concerning which he *spake three thousand proverbs*, or moral aphorisms; and *moreover* (saith Ecclesiastes) *because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs*;[k] the which did contain a great variety of notable observations, and useful directions for common life, couched in pithy expressions.

As for theology, as the study of that was the chief study to which he exhorteth others (as to the *head*, or principal part, *of wisdom*,[l]) so questionless he was himself most conversant therein; for proof whereof he did leave so many excellent theorems and precepts of divinity to us.

In fine, there is no sort of knowledge, to which he did not apply his study: witness himself in those words, *I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven.*[m]

Such a scholar was he; and such if we have a noble ambition to be, we must use the course he did; which was first in his heart to prefer wisdom before all worldly things; then to pray to God for it, or for his blessing in our quest of it; then to use the means of attaining it, diligent searching and hard study; for that this was his method he telleth us: *I* (saith he) *applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things.*[n]

Such considerations show the necessity of industry for a scholar. But,

3. The worth, and excellency, and great utility, together with the pleasantness of his vocation, deserving the highest industry, do superadd much obligation thereto.

We are much bound to be diligent out

* Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.

[f] 1 Kings iii. 9.

[g] 1 Kings iv. 20, 25; x. 27; iv. 21, &c. x. 6, 24; iv. 33. [h] 1 Kings iv. 30.

[i] 1 Kings iv. 32.

[j] Wisd. vii. 15; Eccles. xii. 10; 1 Kings viii.

[k] 1 Kings iv. 32; Eccles. xii. 9.

[l] Prov. ii. 5, &c. [m] Eccles. i. 13.

[n] Eccles. vii. 25.

of ingenuity, and in gratitude to God, who by his gracious providence hath assigned to us a calling so worthy, and employment so comfortable, a way of life no less commodious, beneficial, and delightful to ourselves, than serviceable to God, and useful for the world.

If we had our option and choice, what calling could we desire before this of any whereto men are affixed? How could we better employ our mind, or place our labour, or spend our time, or pass our pilgrimage in this world, than in scholastical occupations?

It were hard to reckon up, or to express, the numberless great advantages of this calling: I shall therefore only touch some, which readily fall under my thought, recommending its value to us.

It is a calling, the design whereof conspireth with the general end of our being; the perfection of our nature in its endowments, and the fruition of it in its best operations.

It is a calling, which doth not employ us in bodily toil, in worldly care, in pursuit of trivial affairs, in sordid drudgeries; but in those angelical operations of soul, the contemplation of truth, and attainment of wisdom; which are the worthiest exercises of our reason, and sweetest entertainments of our mind; the most precious wealth, and most beautiful ornaments of our soul; whereby our faculties are improved, are polished and refined, are enlarged in their power and use by habitual accessions: the which are conducible to our own greatest profit and benefit, as serving to rectify our wills, to compose our affections, to guide our lives in the ways of virtue, to bring us unto felicity.[o]

It is a calling, which, being duly followed, will most sever us from the vulgar sort of men, and advance us above the common pitch; enduing us with light to see further than other men, disposing us to affect better things, and to slight those meaner objects of human desire, on which men commonly dote; freeing us from the erroneous conceits and from the perverse affections of common people. It is said, *διπλοῦν ὁρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα, men of learning are double-sighted:* but it is true, that in many cases they see infinitely further than a vulgar sight doth reach. And if a man by serious study doth acquire a clear and solid judgment of things, so as to assign to each its due weight and price; if he accordingly be inclined in his heart to affect and pursue them; if from clear and right notions of things, a meek and ingenuous temper of mind, a command and moderation of passions, a firm integrity, and a cordial love of goodness do spring, he thereby becometh another kind of thing, much different from those brutish men (beasts of the people) who blindly follow the motions of their sensual appetite, or the suggestions of their fancy, or their mistaken prejudices.

It is a calling which hath these considerable advantages, that, by virtue of improvment therein, we can see with our own eyes, and guide ourselves by our own reasons, not being led blindfold about or depending precariously on the conduct of others, in matters of highest concern to us; that we are exempted from giddy credulity, from wavering levity, from fond admiration of persons and things, being able to distinguish of things, and to settle our judgments about them, and to get an intimate acquaintance with them, assuring to us their true nature and worth; that we are also thereby rescued from admiring ourselves, and that overweening self-conceitedness, of which the Wise Man saith, *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*[p]

It is a calling, whereby we are qualified and enabled to do God service; to gratify his desires, to promote his honour, to advance his interests; to render his name glorious in the world, by teaching, maintaining, and propagating his truth; by persuading men to render their due love, reverence, and obedience to him; than which we can have no more honourable or satisfactory employment; more like to that of the glorious and blessed spirits.

It is a calling, the due prosecution whereof doth ingratiate us with God, and procureth his favour; rendering us fit objects of his love, and entitling us thereto in regard to our qualities and recompense of our works: for *God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom*: and, *So*

[o] Prov. ii. 4, 10, 11.

[p] Prov. xxvi. 16.

shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.[q]

It is a calling, whereby with greatest advantage we may benefit men, and deserve well of the world; drawing men to the knowledge and service of God, reclaiming them from error and sin, rescuing them from misery, and conducting them to happiness; by clear instruction, by faithful admonition, by powerful exhortation. And what can be more noble, than to be the lights of the world, the guides of practice to men, the authors of so much good, so egregious benefactors to mankind?

It is a calling most exempt from the cares, the crosses, the turmoils, the factious jars, the anxious intrigues, the vexatious molestations of the world; its business lying out of the road of those mischiefs, wholly lying in solitary retirement, or being transacted in the most innocent and ingenuous company.

It is a calling least subject to any danger or disappointment; wherein we may well be assured not to miscarry or lose our labour; for the merchant indeed by manifold accidents may lose his voyage, or find a bad market; the husbandman may plough and sow in vain; but the student hardly can fail of improving his stock, and reaping a good crop of knowledge; especially if he study with a conscientious mind, and pious reverence to God, imploring his gracious help and blessing.

It is a calling, the industry used wherein doth abundantly recompense itself, by the pleasure and sweetness which it carrieth in it; so that the more pains one taketh, the more delight he findeth, feeling himself proportionably to grow in knowledge, and that his work becometh continually more easy to him.

It is a calling, the business whereof doth so exercise as not to weary, so entertain as not to cloy us; being not (as other occupations are) a drawing in a mill, or a nauseous tedious repetition of the same work; but a continued progress toward fresh objects; our mind not being staked to one or a few poor matters, but having immense fields of contemplation, wherein it may everlastingly expatiate, with great proficiency and pleasure.[s]

[s] Γηράσκει δ' ἀεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος.

[q] Wisd. vii. 28; Psal. v. 5; Prov. iii. 4.

It is a calling, which doth ever afford plentiful fruit, even in regard to the conveniences of this present and temporal state; the which sufficiently will requite the pains expended thereon: for if we be honestly industrious, we shall not want success; and succeeding, we shall not want a competence of wealth, of reputation, of interest in the world: for concerning wisdom, which is the result of honest study, the Wise Man telleth us, *Riches and honour are with her, yea, durable riches and righteousness: Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour: Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.*[r] In common experience, the wealth of the mind doth quality for employments, which have good recompenses annexed to them; and neither God nor man will suffer him long to want, who is endowed with worthy accomplishments of knowledge. It was a ridiculous providence in Nero, that if he should chance to lose his empire, he might live by fiddling: yet his motto was good; and Dionysius, another tyrant, found the benefit of it; τὸ τεχνίον πᾶσα γαῖα τρέφει, he that hath any good art, hath therein an estate, and land in every place; he is secured against being reduced to extremity of any misfortune: *Wisdom* (saith the Wise man) *is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*[s] Money is a defence, of which fortune may bereave us; but wisdom is beyond its attacks, being a treasure seated in a place inaccessible to external impressions.

And as a learned man cannot be destitute of substance; so he cannot want credit, having such an ornament, than which none hath a more general estimation; and which can be of low rate only among that sort of folk, to whom Solomon saith, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? — and fools hate knowledge?* It is that which recommendeth a man in all company, and procureth regard, every one yielding attention and

[r] Prov. viii. 18; iii. 16; iv. 8, 9.

[s] Eccl. vii. 12.

acceptance to instructive, neat, apposite discourse (that which the scripture calleth *acceptable, pleasant, gracious words;*[t]) men think themselves obliged thereby, by receiving information and satisfaction from it; and accordingly, *Every man* (saith the Wise Man) *shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer;* and—*for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend;* and, *the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious.*[u] It is that, an eminency wherein purchaseth lasting fame, and a life after death, in the good memory and opinion of posterity: *Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation.*[v] A fame no less great, and far more innocent, than acts of chivalry and martial prowess; for is not Aristotle as renowned for teaching the world with his pen, as Alexander for conquering it with his sword? Is not one far oftener mentioned than the other? Do not men hold themselves much more obliged to the learning of the philosopher, than to the valour of the warrior? Indeed the fame of all others is indebted to the pains of the scholar, and could not subsist but with and by his fame: *Dignum laude virum Musa vetat nori;* learning consecrateth itself and its subject together to immortal remembrance.

It is a calling that fitteth a man for all conditions and fortunes; so that he can enjoy prosperity with moderation, and sustain adversity with comfort: he that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes.

In fine, it is a calling, which Solomon, who had curiously observed and exactly compared and scanned, by reason and by experience, all other occupations and ways of life, did prefer above all others; and we may presume would sooner have parted with his royal state, than with his learning; for *Wisdom* (saith he) *is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding;*[w] and, *Then I saw* (then, that is, after a serious disquisition and discussion of things, I saw) *that wisdom excelleth folly* (that is, knowledge excelleth ignorance) *as light excelleth darkness.*[x]

These things and much more may be said of learning in general; but if more distinctly we survey each part, and each object of it, we shall find that each doth yield considerable emoluments and delights, benefit to our soul, advantage to our life; satisfaction to our mind.

The observation of things, and collection of experiments, how doth it enrich the mind with ideas, and breed a kind of familiar acquaintance with all things, so that nothing doth surprise us, or strike our mind with astonishment and admiration! And if our *eye be not satisfied with seeing, nor our ear filled with hearing,*[y] how much less is our mind satiated with the pleasures of speculating and observing that immense variety of objects subject to its view!

The exercise of our mind in rational discursiveness about things in quest of truth; canvassing questions, examining arguments for and against; how greatly doth it better us, fortifying our natural parts, enabling us to fix our thoughts on objects without roving, inuring us to weigh and resolve, and judge well about matters proposed; preserving us from being easily abused by captious fallacies, gulled by specious pretences, tossed about with every doubt or objection started before us!

Invention of any kind (in discerning the causes of abstruse effects, in resolving hard problems, in demonstrating theorems, in framing composures of witty description, or forcible persuasion), how much doth it exceed the pleasure of hunting for any game, or of combatting for any victory! Do any man's children so much please him, as these creatures of his brain?

The reading of books, what is it but conversing with the wisest men of all ages and all countries, who thereby communicate to us their most deliberate

[t] Prov. xii. 8; A man shall be commended according to his wisdom.—Prov. i. 22, 7; xxii. 17.

[u] Prov. xxiv. 26; xxii. 11; Eccels. x. 12.

[v] Ecclus. xxxix. 9.

[w] Prov. iv. 7.

[x] Eccles. ii. 13.

[y] Eccles. i. 8.

thoughts, choicest notions, and best inventions, couched in good expression, and digested in exact method?

And as to the particular matters or objects of study, all have their use and pleasure. I shall only touch them.

The very initial studies of tongues and grammatical literature are very profitable and necessary, as the inlets to knowledge, whereby we are enabled to understand wise men speaking their sense in their own terms and lively strain, whereby especially we are assisted to drink sacred knowledge out of the fountains, the divine oracles.

Luther would not part with a little Hebrew he had for all the Turkish empire.

Rhetoric, or the art of conveying our thoughts to others by speech with advantages of clearness, force, and elegancy, so as to instruct, to persuade, to delight the auditors; of how great benefit is it, if it be well used! How much may it conduce to the service of God, and edification of men! What hath been a more effectual instrument of doing good, and working wonders not only in the world, but in the church? How many souls have been converted from error, vanity, and vice, to truth, soberness, and virtue, by an eloquent Apollos, a Basil, a Chrysostom![2]

The perusal of history, how pleasant illumination of mind, how useful direction of life, how sprightly incentives to virtue doth it afford! How doth it supply the room of experience, and furnish us with prudence at the expense of others, informing us about the ways of action, and the consequences thereof by examples, without our own danger or trouble! How may it instruct and encourage us in piety, while therein we trace the paths of God in men, or observe the methods of divine Providence, how the Lord and Judge of the world in due season protecteth, prospereth, blesseth, rewardeth innocence and integrity; how he crosseth, defeateth, blasteth, curseth, punisheth iniquity, and outrage; managing things with admirable temper of wisdom, to the good of mankind, and advancement of his own glory!

The mathematical sciences, how pleasant is the speculation of them to the mind! how useful is the practice to common life! how do they whet and excite the mind! how do they inure it to strict reasoning and patient meditation!

Natural philosophy, the contemplation of this great theatre, or visible system presented before us; observing the various appearances therein, and enquiring into their causes; reflecting on the order, connection, and harmony of things; considering their original source and their final design: how doth it enlarge our minds, and advance them above vulgar amusements, and the admiration of those petty things, about which men cark and bicker! How may it serve to work in us pious affections of admiration, reverence, and love toward our great Creator, whose *eternal divinity is clearly seen*, whose *glory is declared*,[3] whose transcendent perfections and attributes of immense power, wisdom, and goodness are conspicuously displayed, whose particular kindness toward us men doth evidently shine in those his works of nature!

The study of moral philosophy, how exceedingly beneficial may it be to us, suggesting to us the dictates of reason, concerning the nature and faculties of our soul, the chief good and end of our life, the way and means of attaining happiness, the best rules and methods of practice; the distinctions between good and evil, the nature of each virtue, and motives to embrace it; the rank wherein we stand in the world, and the duties proper to our relations: by rightly understanding and estimating which things, we may know how to behave ourselves decently and soberly toward ourselves, justly and prudently toward our neighbours; we may learn to correct our inclinations, to regulate our appetites, to moderate our passions, to govern our actions, to conduct and wield all our practice well in prosecution of our end; so as to enjoy our being and conveniences of life in constant quiet and peace, with tranquillity and satisfaction of mind!

But especially the study of theology, how numberless, unexpressible advantages doth it yield! For

It enlighteneth our minds with the best knowledge concerning the most high and

[2] Ἀνὴρ λόγιος, καὶ δυνατός,—Acts xviii. 24.

[3] Rom. i. 10; Psal. xix. 1; viii.

worthy objects, in order to the most happy end, with the firmest assurance.

It certainly and perfectly doth inform us concerning the nature and attributes, the will and intentions, the works and providence of God.

It fully declareth to us our own nature, our original, our designed end, our whole duty, our certain way of attaining eternal life and felicity.

It exactly teacheth us how we should demean ourselves in all respects piously toward God, justly and charitably toward our neighbour, soberly toward ourselves; without blame in the world, with satisfaction of our conscience, with assured hope of blessed rewards.

It proposeth those encouragements, and exhibiteth assurances of those helps, which serve potently to engage us in all good practice.

It setteth before us a most complete and lively pattern of all goodness; apt most clearly to direct, most strongly to excite, most obligingly to engage us thereto; especially instructing and inclining to the practice of the most high and hard duties, meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, contempt of all worldly vanities.

It discovereth those sublime mysteries and stupendous wonders of grace, whereby God hath demonstrated an incomprehensible kindness to mankind, and our obligation to correspondent gratitude.[b]

It representeth manifold arguments and incentives to love God with most intense affection, to confide in him with most firm assurance, to delight in him continually *with joy unspeakable;* which are the noblest, the sweetest, the happiest operations of our soul.

It reareth our hearts from vain thoughts and mean desires concerning these poor, transitory, earthly things, to contemplations, affections, and hopes towards objects most excellent, eternal, and celestial.[c]

It engageth us to study the book of God, the book of books, the richest mine of most excellent knowledge, containing infallible oracles of truth, and heavenly rules of life, *which are able to make us wise to salvation, and perfect to every good work.*[d]

And how can we otherwise be so well employed, as in meditation about such things? What occupation doth nearer approach to that of the blessed angels? What heaven is there upon earth like to that of constantly feasting our minds and hearts in the contemplation of such objects? Especially considering that this study doth not only yield private benefit to ourselves in forwarding our own salvation, but enableth us by our guidance and encouragement to promote the eternal welfare of others, and by our endeavours to people heaven, according to that exhortation of St. Paul pressing on Timothy this study with diligence: *Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*[e]

So considerable is each part of learning, so extremely profitable are some parts of it. Indeed the skill of any liberal art is valuable, as a handsome ornament, as an harmless divertisement, as an useful instrument upon occasions; as preferable to all other accomplishments and advantages of person or fortune (beauty, strength, wealth, power, or the like;) for who would not purchase any kind of such knowledge at any rate; who would sell it for any price; who would not choose rather to be deformed or impotent in his body, than to have a mishapen and weak mind; to have rather a lank purse, than an empty brain; to have no title at all, than no worth to bear it out; if any would, he is not of Solomon's mind; for of wisdom (by which he meaneth a comprehension of all knowledge, divine and human;[f] into which the knowledge of natural things, of mathematics, of poetry, are reckoned ingredients) he saith, *The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Her fruit is better than gold,*

[b] 1 Pet. i. 12; Tit. iii. 4.
[c] 2 Cor. iv. 18.
[d] (2 Tim. iii. 15;) Psal. xix. 10.
[e] 1 Tim. iv. 16.
[f] 1 Kings iv. 29.—

yea than fine gold ; and her revenue than choice silver.[g]

Now, then, considering all these advantages of our calling, if we by our negligence or sluggishness therein do lose them, are we not very ingrateful to God, who gave them, as with a gracious intent for our good, so with expectation that we should improve them to his service? If God had allotted to us the calling of rustics, or of artificers, we had been impious in not diligently following it; but we are abominably ingrateful in neglecting this most incomparably excellent vocation.

Are we not extremely defective to ourselves, if indulging a wretched humour of laziness we will not enjoy those sweet pleasures, nor embrace those great profits to which God in mercy calleth us?

If Solomon said true, *He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul, he that keepeth understanding shall find good ;*[h] how little friends are we to ourselves, how neglectful of our own welfare, by not using the means of getting wisdom!

The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge,[i] saith Solomon; what a fool, then, is he that shunneth it! who, though it be his way, and his special duty to seek it, yet neglecteth it; choosing rather to do nothing, or to do worse.

And do we not deserve great blame, displeasure, and disgrace from mankind, if, having such opportunities of qualifying ourselves to do good, and serve the public, we by our idleness render ourselves worthless and useless?

How, being slothful in our business, can we answer for our violating the wills, for abusing the goodness, for perverting the charity and bounty of our worthy founders and benefactors, who gave us the good things we enjoy, not to maintain us in idleness, but for supports and encouragements of our industry! how can we excuse ourselves from dishonesty, and perfidious dealing, seeing that we are admitted to these enjoyments under condition, and upon confidence (confirmed by our free promises and most solemn engagements) of using them according to their pious intent, that is, in a diligent prosecution of our studies, in order to the service of God, and of the public?

Let every scholar, when he mispendeth an hour, or sluggeth on his bed, but imagine that he heareth the voice of those glorious kings, or venerable prelates, or worthy gentlemen, complaining thus, and rating him: Why, sluggard, dost thou against my will possess my estate? why dost thou presume to occupy the place due to an industrious person? why dost thou forget or despise thy obligations to my kindness? Thou art an usurper, a robber, or a purloiner of my goods, which I never intended for such as thee; I challenge thee of wrong to myself, and of sacrilege toward my God, to whose service I devoted those his gifts to me.

How reproachful will it be to us, if that expostulation may concern us, *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?*[j]

If to be a dunce or a bungler in any profession be shameful, how much more ignominious and infamous to a scholar to be such! from whom all men expect that he should excel in intellectual abilities and be able to help others by his instruction and advice.

Nothing surely would more grate on the heart of one that hath a spark of ingenuity, of modesty, of generous good nature, than to be liable to such an imputation.

To avoid it, therefore (together with all the guilt and all the mischiefs attending on sloth), let each of us, in God's name, carefully mind his business; and let the grace and blessing of God prosper you therein. Amen.

SERMON LV.

THE UNSEARCHABLENESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

ROM. xi. 33.—*How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.*

THESE words are the close of a deputation, wherein St. Paul was engaged with the advocates of Judaism, concerning

[g] Prov. iii. 14; viii. 11, 19; xvi. 16; xx. 15; iv. 7.
[h] Prov. xix. 8.
[i] Prov. xv. 14.
[j] Prov. xvii. 16

God's providence toward his ancient people, in rejecting the greatest part of them, upon their refusal to embrace the Christian doctrine; and in admitting the gentile world to favour upon its compliance with the overtures thereof proposed in the gospel. In this proceeding those infidels could not discern God's hand, nor would allow such a dispensation worthy of him, advancing several exceptions against it: God, said they, having espoused and consecrated us to himself; having to our fathers, in regard to their piety, made so absolute promises of benediction on their posterity; having consequently endowed us with such privileges and choice pledges of his favour; having taken so much pains with us, and performed so great things in our behalf; having so long avowed, supported, and cherished us; how can it well consist with his wisdom, with his justice, with his fidelity, with his constancy, thus instantly to abandon and repudiate us? Doth not this dealing argue his former affections to have been misplaced? doth it not implead his ancient covenant and law of imperfection? doth it not supplant his own designs, and unravel all that he for so many ages hath been doing? Upon such accounts did this dispensation appear very strange and scandalous to them: but St. Paul, being infallibly assured of its truth, doth undertake to vindicate it from all misprisions, rendering a fair account of it, and assigning for it many satisfactory reasons, drawn from the general equity of the case, from the nature of God, his attributes, and his relations to men; from the congruity of this proceeding to the tenour of God's providence, to his most ancient purposes, to the true intent of his promises, to his express declarations and predictions; to the state of things in the world, and the pressing needs of all mankind: such reasons (I say, which I have not time more explicitly to relate) doth the apostle produce in favour of this great dispensation; the which did suffice to clear and justify it from all their objections: yet notwithstanding, after that he had steered his discourse through all these rocks, he thought it safe to cast anchor; winding up the contest in this modest intimation, that whatever he could say, might not perhaps exhaust the difficulty, or void all scruple; that therefore in this, and in all such cases, for entire satisfaction, we should have recourse to the incomprehensible wisdom of God, who frequently in the course of his providence doth act upon grounds, and ordereth things in methods, transcending our ability to discover or trace: to consider some causes and reasons of which incomprehensibility, and to ground thereon some practical advices, will be the scope of my discourse: the reasons may be these:

1. As the dealings of very wise men sometimes are founded upon maxims, and admit justifications, not obvious nor penetrable by vulgar conceit; so may God act according to rules of wisdom and justice, which it may be quite impossible by our faculties to apprehend, or with our means to descry.

As there are natural modes of being and operation (such as God's necessary subsistence, his production of things from nothing, his eternity without succession, his immensity without extension, his prescience without necessitation of events, his ever acting, but never changing; and the like), so there may be prudential and moral rules of proceeding far above our reach: so God himself telleth us, *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*[a] Some of them we may be uncapable to know, because of finite nature; they being peculiar objects of divine wisdom, and not to be understood by any creature: for as God cannot impart the power of doing all things possible, so may he not communicate the faculty of knowing all things intelligible; that being indeed to ungod himself, or to deprive himself of his peerless supremacy in wisdom; hence he is styled *the only wise God;* hence he is said to *dwell in light inaccessible;* hence he *chargeth the angels with folly;* hence the most illuminate seraphims do veil their faces before him.[b]

Other such rules we may not be able to perceive from the meanness of our nature, or our low rank among creatures: far beneath omniscience there being in-

[a] Isa. lv. 9.

[b] 1 Tim. i. 17; Rom. xvi. 27; Jude 25; 1 Tim. vi. 16; Job iv. 18; Isa. vi. 2.

numerable forms of intelligence, in the lowest of these we sit, one remove from beasts; being endowed with capacities suitable to that inferior station, and to those meaner employments, for which we were designed and framed; whence our mind hath a pitch, beyond which it cannot soar;[c] and things clearly intelligible to more noble creatures, moving in a higher orb, may be dark and unexplicable to us: *As an angel of God, so is my Lord the king, to discern good and bad*,[d] was an expression importing this difference, how those glorious creatures do overtop us in intellectual capacities.

Also diverse notions not simply passing our capacity to know, we are not yet in condition to ken, by reason of our circumstances here, in this dark corner of things, to which we are confined, and wherein we lie under many disavantages of attaining knowledge. He that is shut up in a close place, and can only peep through chinks, who standeth in a valley, and hath his prospect intercepted, who is encompassed with fogs, who hath but a dusky light to view things by, whose eyes are weak or foul, how can he see much or far; how can he discern things remote, minute, or subtile, clearly and distinctly? Such is our case: our mind is pent up in the body, and looketh only through those clefts by which objects strike our sense; its intuition is limited within a very small compass; it resideth in an atmosphere of fancy, stuffed with exhalations from temper, appetite, passion, interest; its light is scant and faint (for sense and experience do reach only some few gross matters of fact; light infused, and revelation imparted to us, proceed from arbitrary dispensation, in definite measures;) our ratiocination consequently from such principles must be very short and defective; nor are our minds ever thoroughly sound, or pure and defecate from prejudices; hence no wonder that now we are wholly ignorant of divers great truths, or have but a glimmering notion of them, which we may and hereafter shall come fully and clearly to understand; so that even apostles, the secretaries of Heaven, might say, *We know in part, and we prophesy in part; we now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.*[e]

In fine, those rules of equity or expedience, which we in our transactions with one another do use (being derived from our original inclinations to like some good things, or from notions stamped on our soul when God made us according to his image, from common experience, from any kind of rational collection, from the prescription of God's word), if they be applied to the dealings of God, will be found very incongruous, or deficient; the case being vastly altered, from that infinite distance in nature and state between God and us; and from the immense differences which his relations toward us have from our relations to one another.

Wherefore, in divers inquiries about Providence, to which our curiosity will stretch itself, it is impossible for us to be resolved; and launching into them, we shall soon get out of our depth, so as to swim in dissatisfaction, or to sink into distrust: Why God made the world at such an instant, no sooner or later; why he made it thus, not exempt from all disorder; why he framed man (the prince of visible creatures) so fallible and frail, so prone to sin, so liable to misery; why so many things happen offensive to him, why his gifts are distributed with such inequality? Such questions we are apt to propound and to debate; but the resolution of them our mind perhaps was not made to apprehend, nor in its most elevate condition shall attain it: however, in this state we by no means can come at it; ti at least being kept close from us among those things, of which it is said, *the secret things belong unto the Lord our God*, in distinction from others, about which it is added, *but those that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever.*[f]

In such cases the absolute will, the sovereign authority, the pure liberality of God, do supply the place of reasons; sufficient, if not to satisfy the minds of men fondly curious, yet to stop the mouths of those who are boldly peremptory;[g] the which are alleged, not with intent to imply that God ever acteth unaccountably, or without highest reason, but that sometimes his methods of acting are not fit

[c] Psal. cii. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 11.
[d] 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20; xix. 27.
[e] 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12.
[f] Deut. xxix. 29.
[g] Rom. ix. 20; Isa. xlv. 9.

subjects of our conception or discussion; for otherwhile God appealeth to the verdict of our reason; when the case is such that we can apprehend it, and the apprehension of it may conduce to good purposes.[h]

2. As the standing rules of God's acting, so the occasional grounds thereof, are commonly placed beyond the sphere of our apprehension.

God is obliged to prosecute his own immutable decrees; *working all things* (as the apostle saith) *according to the counsel of his own will*;[i] which how can we anywise come to discover? Can we climb up above the heaven of heavens, and there unlock his closet, rifle his cabinet, and peruse the records of everlasting destiny, by which the world is governed? No: *Who knoweth his mind, or hath been his counsellor? Who* (saith the prophet) *hath stood in the counsel of the Lord; or hath perceived and heard his word?*[j]

He doth *search the hearts, and try the reins of men;* he doth *weigh their spirits*, and *their works;* he doth *know their frame*, he doth *understand their thoughts afar off;**[k] he perceiveth their closest intentions, their deepest contrivances, their most retired behaviours; he consequently is acquainted with their true qualifications, capacities, and merits; unto which he most justly and wisely doth accommodate his dealings with them; the which, therefore, must often thwart the opinions and expectations of us, who are ignorant of those particulars, and can only view the exterior face or semblance of things: for (as Samuel, in the case of preferring David before his brethren, did say) *God seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.*[l]

God also hath a perfect foresight of contingent events; he seeth upon what pin each wheel moveth, and with what weight every scale will be turned;[m] he discerneth all the connections, all the entanglements of things, and what the result will be upon the combination, or the clashing of numberless causes; in correspondence to which perceptions he doth order things consistently and conveniently; whereas we being stark blind, or very dim-sighted in such respects (seeing nothing future, and but few things present), cannot apprehend what is fit and feasible; or why that is done, which appeareth done to us.

God observeth in what relations, and what degrees of comparison (as to their natures, their virtues, their consequences) all things do stand, each toward others; so poising them in the balance of right judgment, as exactly to distinguish their just weight and worth: whereas we cannot tell what things to compare, we know not how to put them into the scale, we are unapt to make due allowances, we are unable to discern which side doth overweigh: in the immense variety of objects, our knowledge doth extend to few things eligible, nor among them can we pick out the best competitors for our choice: hence often must we be at great losses in scanning the designs, or tracing the footsteps of Providence.

3. We are also uncapable thoroughly to discern the ways of Providence from our moral defects, in some measure common to all men; from our stupidity, our sloth, our temerity, our impatience, our impurity of heart, our perverseness of will and affections: we have not the perspicacity to espy the subtile tracks and secret reserves of divine wisdom; we have not the industry, with steady application of mind, to regard and meditate on God's works; we have not the temper and patience to wait upon God, until he discover himself in the accomplishment of his purposes; we have not that *blessed purity of heart*, which is requisite to the *seeing God* in his special dispensations;[n] we have not that rectitude of will and government of our passions, as not to be scandalized at what God doeth, if it thwarteth our conceit or humour: such defects are observable in the best men; who therefore have misapprehended, have disrelished, have fretted, and

* Ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ μόνα ὁρῶμεν τὰ πράγματα. ὁ δὲ τῶν ὅλων Θεὸς, καὶ τῶν ταῦτα ὁρώντων ἐπίσταται τὸν σκοπόν, καὶ τοῦτῳ μᾶλλον, ἢ τοῖς ἔργοις δικάζων ἐκφέρει τὴν ψῆφον.—Theod. Ep. 3.

[h] Gen. xviii. 25; Ezek. xviii. 25; Isa. v. 3.

[i] Eph. i. 11.

[j] Rom. xi. 34; Isa. xl. 13; Jer. xxiii. 18; Wisd. ix. 13.

[k] Prov. xvi. 2; Isa. xxvi. 7; 1 Sam. ii. 3; Psal. ciii. 14; cxxxix. 2; lxiv. 6; Job xiv. 16.

[l] 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

[m] Isa. xlv. 11.

[n] Matt. v. 8.

murmured at the proceedings of God: we might instance in Job, in David, in Elias, in Jonah, in the holy apostles themselves, by whose speeches and deportments in some cases it may appear how difficult it is for us, who have *eyes of flesh*,[o] as Job speaketh, and hearts, too, never quite freed of carnality, to see through, or fully to acquiesce in the dealings of God.

It is indeed a distemper incident to us, which we can hardly shun or cure, that we are apt to measure the equity and expedience of things according to our opinions and passions; affecting consequently to impose on God our silly imaginations as rules of his proceeding, and to constitute him the executioner of our sorry passions: what we conceit fit to be done, that we take God bound to perform; when we feel ourselves stirred, then we presume God must be alike concerned: to our apprehensions, every slight inconvenience is a huge calamity, every scratch of fortune is a ghastly wound; God, therefore, we think, should have prevented it, or must presently remove it; every pitiful bauble, every trivial accommodation is a matter of high consequence, which if God withhold, we are ready to clamour on him, and wail as children for want of a trifle. Are we soundly angry, or inflamed with zeal? then *fire must come down from heaven*,[p] then thunderbolts must fly about, then nothing but sudden woe and vengeance are denounced. Are we pleased? then showers of blessings must descend on the heads, then floods of wealth must run into the laps of our favourites, otherwise we are not satisfied; and scarce can deem God awake, or mindful of his charge. We do beyond measure hate or despise some persons, and to those God must not afford any favour, any mercy, any forbearance, or time of repentance; we excessively admire or dote on others, and those God must not touch or cross; if he doth not proceed thus, he is in danger to forfeit his authority: he must hardly be allowed to govern the world, in case he will not square his administrations to our fond conceit or froward humour: hence no wonder that men often are stumbled about Providence; for God will not rule according to their fancy or pleasure (it would be a mad world if he should), neither indeed could he do so if he would, their judgments and their desires being infinitely various, inconsistent, and repugnant. Again,

4. The nature of those instruments which divine Providence doth use in administration of human affairs, hindereth us from discerning it: it is an observation among philosophers, that the footsteps of divine wisdom are, to exclusion of doubt, far more conspicuous in the works of nature, than in the management of our affairs;* so that some, who by contemplation of natural appearances were convinced of God's existence, and his protection of the world (who thence, could not doubt but that an immense wisdom had erected the beautiful frame of heaven and earth, had ranged the stars in their order and courses, had formed the bodies and souls of animals,† had provided for the subsistence and propagation of each species, had settled and doth uphold the visible world in its so comely and convenient state, that even such men), reflecting on the course of human transactions, have staggered into distrust whether a divine wisdom doth sit at the helm of our affairs; many thence hardly would admit God to be concerned in them, but supposed him to commit their conduct to a fatal swinge, or casual fluctuation of obvious causes: one great reason of this difference may be, that whereas the instruments of divine power in nature are in themselves merely passive, or act only as they are acted by pure necessity (as a pen in writing or a hammer in striking), being thence determinate, uniform, constant, and certain in their operation; whenever there any footsteps of counsel, any tendency to an end, and deviation from the common tracks of motion do appear, such effects cannot reasonably be imputed merely to natural causes, but to a superior wisdom, wielding them in such a manner, and steering them to such a mark: but the visible

[o] Job x. 4. [p] Luke ix. 54.

* Nam cum dispositi quæsissem fœdera mundi,
Præscriptosque mari fines ———
——— tunc omnia rebar
Consilio firmata Dei ———
Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi
Adspicerem ———
———rursus labefacta cadebat
Religio, &c. *Claud. in Ruf.* i.

† Diod. Sic. lib. xv. p. 482

engines of Providence in our affairs are self-moving agents, working with knowledge and choice; the which, as in themselves they are indeterminate, irregular, and uncertain; so they are capable to be diversified in numberless unaccountable ways, according to various representations of objects, or by influence of divers principles inclining to judge and choose differently: temper, humour, passion, prejudice, custom, example, together with contingencies of occasion (depending on like principles in adjacent free causes), do move, singly or combinedly, in ways so implicate, to the production of so various events, that nothing hardly can fall out, which may not with some plausible colour of reason be derived from some one of those sources, or from a complication of them: nothing can appear so uncouth or extravagant, which may not be fathered on some fetch of wit, or some hit of fancy, or some capricio of humour, or some transport of passion, or some lucky advantage, or on divers of those conspiring; whence, in accounting for the reason of such events, men deem they may leave out Providence as superfluous; especially considering, that usually disorders and defects, only imputable to man's will, do accompany and further such events.

For instance, what other cause would many think needful to assign for the conveyance of Joseph into Egypt, than the envy of his brethren; for Shimei's reviling David, than his base malignity; for David's numbering the people, than his wanton pride; for Jeroboam's revolt, than his unruly ambition; for Job's being robbed, than the thievish disposition of the Arabs; for his being diseased, than a redundance of bad humours; for our Lord's suffering, than the spiteful rage of the Jewish rulers and people; together with the treacherous avarice of Judas, and the corrupt easiness of Pilate? [q] These events all of them are ascribed to God's hand and special ordination; but men could not see or avow it in them: what need, will men ever say, in such cases to introduce God's aid, when human means suffice to achieve the feat?

[q] Gen. xlv. 5; l. 20; Psal. cv. 17; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; xxiv. 1; 1 Kings xii. 15, 24; Job i. 15, &c.; Acts ii. 23; iv. 28.

5. Indeed, as in nature, the influences of heaven, and of inferior causes, so commonly in the production of these events, divine and human agency are so knit and twisted one with the other, that it is not easy to discrimtnate them, so as to sever the bounds of common and special providence; or to discern what God performeth by natural instruments, what by superior efficacy; when the balance turneth from our inclinations, when it is cast from a grain thrown in by divine interposition; the management of these affairs being a concert, wherein God's wisdom beareth one part, man's free-will playeth another;* fortune and occasion also do strike in; we, not seeing the first, are prone to ascribe all the harmony to the last, which are most obvious and visible.

6. The more apt we are to do thus, because the manner of divine efficacy is ever very soft and gentle: God disposeth things *fortiter et suaviter*;[r] so as effectually to perform what he designeth, but in the most sweet and easy way: his providence doth not hurry along like an impetuous rumbling torrent, but glideth on as a smooth and still current, with an irresistible but imperceptible force carrying things down therewith: without much ado, without any clatter, by a nod of his head, by a whisper of his mouth, by a turn of his hand, he doth effect his purposes: winding up a close spring, he setteth the greatest wheels in motion:† and thrusting in an insensible spoke, he stoppeth the greatest wheels in their career; injecting a thought, exciting an humour, presenting an occasion, insinuating a petty accident, he bringeth about the most notable events. He doth so *fashion the hearts of men*, so *manage their hands*, so *guide their steps*, that even they who are acted by him cannot feel the least touch upon them. For, *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; he turneth it wheresoever he will*;[s] that is, by secret pipes, by obscure channels, God conveyeth the minds

* Θεὸς μὲν πάντα, καὶ μετὰ Θεὸν τύχη καὶ καιρὸς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα κυβερνῶσι ξύμπαντα.—Max. Tyr. diss. 3, e Platt.

† Θεοῦ τινος ἐμβάλλοντος εἰς νοῦν ἀνθρώπῳ.—Plut. Timol.

[r] Wisd. viii. 1,—εὐρώστως καὶ χρηστῶς.

[s] Psal xxxiii. 15; Isa. xli. 13; xlii. 6; Prov. xvi. 9; xx. 24; Jer. x. 23; Job xxxiii. 14; xxiii. 8; Prov. xxi. 1.

and wills of greatest persons (the chief engines of his providence) unto such points of resolution as he pleaseth, so that they seem to flow thither of their own accord, without any exterior direction or impulse: hence do his most effectual operations slip by us without making impression on our minds, which are wont to apprehend things, as with a gross palpability they do incur into the senses, so that the Preacher, comparing the methods of Providence with the most occult proceedings in nature, might well say, *As thou knowest not the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.*[t] Again,

7. God, in his progress toward the achievement of any design, is not wont to go in the most direct and compendious ways, but commonly windeth about, and taketh a large compass, enfolding several other coincident purposes, some whereof may be no less considerable, than is that, which we deem most necessary, and affect to see despatched: but this course seemeth tedious to us, who have not the wit to perceive that complexion of ends, nor the temper to wait for the completion of them. If God, when we seem to need, doth not instantly appear in our favour and succour; if he doth not presently vindicate truth and right; if he doth not nip wicked designs in the bud, and repress the first onsets of outrageous violence; if for a while he suffereth the *tabernacles of robbers to prosper*, and *iniquity to lift up its horn*; then he is in a slumber, quite unmindful or insensible of us; then he turneth aside his face, or doth behold what passeth as an unconcerned spectator; the he standeth aloof, unready to help us; then doth he hold off his hand, not meddling in our affairs; in such cases we are apt to cry out, *Estis ubi? O superi!*[u] *How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget; how long wilt thou hide thy face? Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? why standest thou afar off? why withdrawest thou thy hand? pluck it out of thy bosom: Return, O Lord, how long?*[v] Such are our prayers, such our expostulations; so is our blind impatience prone to muse and mutter; not considering how many good designs God is carrying on in a calm and steady pace, by well measured steps, all which, in due season, when they are ripe for accomplishment, shall undoubtedly be effected; for *The Lord* (as St. Peter saith) *is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward all men;*[w] that is, he certainly will express his faithful benignity toward good men, yet so as also to extend his merciful patience toward others; he so will tender the interests of some, as concurrently to procure the welfare of all, and accordingly will time his proceedings, allowing the leisure and opportunities requisite thereto: he can, although we cannot, *wait to be gracious;*[x] for as in him there are no passions to precipitate action, so to him there are no sensible differences of time, *one year being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

8. Again, God (as is the property of every wise agent) is wont to act variously, according to the state and circumstances of things, or to the dispositions and capacities of persons; so as to do the same thing for different ends, and different things for the same end; to apply one instrument to several uses, and by several instruments to work out one purpose: so he afflicteth good men out of love, for trial and improvement of their virtues; bad men in displeasure, to illustrate his power and justice on them; he encourageth and blesseth the one, he punisheth and curseth the other with prosperity; he reclaimeth both from error and sin by either of those methods, as their temper and their circumstances do require. Whence it is very difficult for us ever from the kind of accidents befalling men, to divine how far God is concerned in them, or to what particular scope they are aimed; so that well might

[t] Eccles. xi. 5.
[u] Sil. Ital.

[v] Psal. xiii. 1, lxxxix. 46; xc. 13; lxxiv. 10; xliv. 24; lv. 1; xciv. 3; xxxv. 17; xliv. 23; xxxv. 23; vii. 6; lxxiv. 11; x. 1; xc. 13; vi. 4; vii. 7; lxxx. 14; xxii. 1; xi. 19; xxxviii. 2; lxxi. 12. *Vide* Hab. i. 2.
[w] (Jer. xxiii. 20;) 2 Pet. iii. 9, 0.
[x] Isa. xxx. 18.

the Preacher, upon a careful observation of such occurrences, establish this rule, *No man knoweth love or hatred* (that is, the special regard of God toward men) *by all that is before them;* because, *all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.*[x] Further,

9. There are different ends which Providence in various order and measure doth pursue, which we, by reason of our dim insight and short prospect, cannot descry:[y] God, as the universal and perpetual Governor of the world, in his dispensation of things, respecteth not only the good of this or that person, of one nation or one age; but often in some degree waiving that, or taking care for it in a less remarkable way, hath a provident regard to the more extensive good of a whole people, of the world, of posterity; as he did order his friend Abraham to wander in a strange land for the benefit of his seed; Joseph to be sold, calumniated, and fettered for the preservation of his family; our Lord to suffer those grievous things for the redemption of mankind; the Jews to be rejected for the salvation of the Gentiles: in such cases purblind men, observing events to cross particular and present ends, but not being aware how conducible they may prove to general, remote, and more important designs, can hardly be satisfied how God should be concerned in them; the present, or that which lieth adjacent just under our nose, is all that we can or will consider; and therefore must be ill judges of what is done by all-provident wisdom.

10. Again, God permitteth things, bad in their own nature, with regard to their instrumental use and tendency; for that often the worst things may be ordinable to the best ends; things very bitter may work pleasant effects; upon the wildest stock divine husbandry can ingraft most excellent fruit; sin really, and suffering reputedly, are the worst evils, yet from them much glory to God and great benefit to men do accrue; even from the most wicked act that ever was committed, from the most lamentable event that ever did happen, fruits admirably glorious and immensely beneficial did spring; yet usually so blind are we as to be offended at such things, and from them to raise exceptions against Providence.

11. Also the expediency of things to be permitted or crossed, doth frequently consist, not in themselves singly taken, as particular acts or events, but in their conjunction, or reference to others, with which they may become subservient toward a common end; so that divers things in themselves extremely bad may by combination or collision engender good effects; and thence prove fit weapons or tools of Providence; as the most deadly poisons may be so mixed, that curbing one another's force, they may constitute a harmless mass, sometimes a wholesome medicine: but we poring on the simple ingredients, and not considering how they may be tempered, or how applied by a skilful hand, can hardly deem the toleration of them congruous to wisdom. Further,

12. That Providence sometimes is obscure and intricate, may be attributed to the will of God, upon divers good accounts designing it to be such: *Verily* (saith the prophet) *thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*[z]

God commonly doth not intend to exert his hand notoriously; for that whereas every special interposition of his hand is in effect a miracle (surmounting the natural power, or thwarting the ordinary course of inferior causes), it doth not become him to prostitute his miraculous power, or to exert it otherwise than upon singular occasions, and for most weighty causes: it is not conformable to the tenour of his administrations to convince men against their will, or by irresistible evidence to wring persuasion from stubborn or stupid minds; but to exercise the wisdom, and to prove the ingenuity of well-disposed persons, who upon competent intimations shall be capable to spell out, and forward to approve his proceedings.

13. He will not glare forth in discoveries so bright as to dazzle, to confound our weak sight; therefore he veileth his face with a cloud, and wrappeth his power in some obscurity; therefore *clouds and darkness are round about*

[x] Eccles. ix. 1, 2. [y] Hab. iii. 6. [z] Isa. xlv. 15; Psal. lxxxix. 46.

him: he maketh darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him is dark waters and thick clouds of the sky.[a]

14. He meaneth thereby to improve and exalt our faith, being the less seen, that he may be the more believed; faith never rising higher than when it doth soar to objects beyond our sight; when we can approve God's wisdom and justice in occurrences surmounting our conceit; when we can rely upon God's word and help, although the stream of his proceedings seemeth to cross our hopes.

15. It is fit also that God many times designedly should act in ways surpassing our apprehension, and apt to baffle or puzzle our reason, that he may appear God indeed, infinitely transcending us in perfection of wisdom and justice; or that we, comprehending the reason of his actings, may not imagine our wisdom comparable, our justice commensurate to his; yea, that we in those respects do exceed him; for *that* (as Tertullian discourseth) *which may be seen, is less than the eyes that survey it; that which may be comprehended, is less than the hands that grasp it; that which may be valued, is less than the senses which rate it.** It is God's being inestimable that makes him worthily esteemed;† his being incomprehensible rendereth him adorable.

16. The obscurity of Providence doth indeed conciliate an awful reverence toward it; for darkness naturally raiseth a dread of invisible powers; we use to go on tremblingly, when we cannot see far about us; we regard none so much as those, whose wisdom we find to overreach ours, and whose intentions we cannot sound: it was Elihu's observation, *With God is terrible majesty; the Almighty, we cannot find him out; — men do therefore fear him.*[b]

17. It is also requisite that God should dispose many occurrences, cross to our vulgar notions, and offensive to our carnal sense, that we may thence be prompted to think of God, driven to seek him, engaged to mark him interposing in our affairs. Men, from disorderly and surprising accidents, preposterously do conceive doubts about Providence, as if, it managing things, nothing odd or amiss would occur; whereas if no such events did start up, they might be proner to question it, they would at least come to forget or neglect it; for if human transactions passed on as do the motions of nature, in a smooth course, without any rub or disturbance, men commonly would no more think of God than they do when they behold the sun rising, the rivers running, the sea flowing; they would not depend on his protection, or have recourse to him for succour: it is difficulty and distress seizing on them which compel men to implore God for relief, which dispose them to see his hand reaching it forth unto them; according to that in the Psalm: *When he slew them, then they sought him, they returned and inquired early after God; they remembered that God was their rock, and the most high God their Redeemer.*[c] Again,

18. It is needful that the present course of Providence should not be transparently clear and satisfactory, that we may be well assured concerning a future account, and forced in our thoughts to recur thither for a resolution of all such emergent doubts and difficulties: for if all accounts were apparently stated and discharged here; if now right did ever prevail, and iniquity were suppressed; if virtue were duly crowned, and vice deservedly scourged, who would hope or fear an after-reckoning?

This indeed is the grand cause why Providence now doth appear so cloudy, that men consider not how our affairs have no complete determination, or final issue here; things now are doing, and not done; in a progress and tendency toward somewhat beyond, not in a state of consistence and perfection; this not being the place of deciding causes, or dispensing rewards; but a state of probation, of work, of travail, of combat, of running for the prize, of sowing toward the harvest; a state of liberty to follow our own choice, and to lay the ground of our doom; of falling into sin, and of rising thence by repentance; of God's ex-

* Quod videri communiter, quod comprehendi, quod æstimari potest, minus est oculis quibus occupatur, et manibus quibus contaminatur, et sensibus quibus invenitur.—*Tert. Apol.* 17.

† Hoc est quod Deum æstimari facit, dum æstimari non capit.—*Tert.* 16.

[a] Hab. iii. 4; Psal. xcviii. 2; xviii. 11.

[b] Job xxxvii. 22, 23, 24.

[c] Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35.

ercising patience, and exhibiting mercy: wherefore as we cannot well judge of an artificial work by its first draughts, or of a poem by a few scenes, but must stay till all be finished or acted through;[d] so we cannot here clearly discern the entire congruity of providential dispensations to the divine attributes; the catastrophe or utmost resolution of things is the general judgment, wherein the deep wisdom, the exact justice, the perfect goodness of God will be displayed to the full satisfaction or conviction of all men;[e] when God's honour will be thoroughly vindicated, his despised patience and his abused grace will be avenged; every case will be rightly tried, every work will be justly recompensed, all accounts will be set straight; in the mean time divers things must occur unaccountable to us, looking upon things as they now stand absolutely before us, without reference to that day; considering this, may induce us to suspend our opinion about such matters, allowing God to go through with his work before we censure it, not being so quick and precipitate as to forestall his judgment: and surely, would we but observe that reasonable advice of St. Paul, *Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come*,[f] our chief doubts would be resolved, our shrewdest exceptions against Providence would be voided.

These are the chief reasons of the point which meditation did suggest; upon it (for it is not a point merely speculative, but pregnant with useful consequences) divers practical applications may be grounded, which the time scarcely will allow me to name.

1. It should render us modest and sober in our judgment about providential occurrences, not pretending thoroughly to know the reasons of God's proceedings, or to define the consequences of them;[g] for it is plainly fond arrogance, or profane imposture, to assume perfect skill in that which passeth our capacity to learn.

2. It should make us staunch and cautious of grounding judgment or censure upon present events about any cause, or any person; for it is notorious temerity to pass sentence upon grounds uncapable of evidence.[h]

3. It should repress wanton curiosity, which may transport us beyond our bounds in speculation of these mysterious intrigues;[i] so that we shall lose our labour and time, shall discompose our minds, shall plunge ourselves into vain errors or anxious doubts.

4. It should keep us from conceitedness and confidence in our own wisdom; for how can we conceit highly of that, or much confide in it, which we find so unable to penetrate the reason of most common and obvious appearances;[j] so nonplust in its inquiries, so defeated in its expectations, so mistaken in its judgment of things?

5. It should preserve us from infidelity, and from despair upon account of any cross accidents occurring here; for it is unreasonable to disbelieve a notion otherwise well grounded, because we cannot assoil scruples or cavils drawn from matters inscrutable to us; it is foolish to despair of a good event upon appearances, whereof we cannot apprehend the full reason or final result.

6. It should prevent our taking offence, or being discontented at any events rising up before us; for to be displeased at that, which a superior wisdom, unsearchable to us, doth order, is to be displeased at we know not what, or why, which is childish weakness;[k] to fret and wail at that which, for all we can see, proceedeth from good intention, and tendeth to good issue, is pitiful frowardness.

7. It should guard us from security, or from presuming upon impunity for our miscarriages;[l] for seeing God doth not always clearly and fully discover his mind, it is vain from God's reservedness to conclude his unconcernedness; or because he is now patient, that he never will be just in chastising our offences.

8. It should quicken our industry in observing and considering the works of Providence;[m] for since they are not easily discernible, and the discerning them in some measure is sometimes of great use, it is needful that we be very diligent

[d] Chrys. tom. vii. p. 15. [e] Rom. ii. 7.
[f] 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[g] Ecclus. iii. 20; Psal. cxxxi. 1.
[h] Luke xiii. 1.
[i] Job xi. 12; Wisd. ix. 13; Job xlii. 3.
[j] Job xl. 4; xlii. 2; Psal. lxxiii. 22; xxxix 9.
[k] 2 Kings xx. 9; Matt. xvi. 23.
[l] Eccles. viii. 11. [m] Isa. xxvi. 11; v. 12.

in contemplation of them; the fainter our light is, the more attent we should be in looking; the knottier the subject, the more earnest should be our study on it.

9. It should oblige us to be circumspect and wary in our conversation; for the darker the way is, the more careful should be our walking therein, lest we err, lest we stumble, lest we strike on somewhat hurtful to us.

10. It should engage us constantly to seek God, and to depend on him, for the protection and conduct of his grace, which is the only clue that can lead us safely through this intricate labyrinth of worldly contingencies.[n]

11. In fine, it should cause us humbly to admire and adore that wisdom, which governeth the world in ways no less great and wonderful, than just and holy:[o] for *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints.*[p]

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON LVI.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.—*Obey them that have the rule over you.*

OBEDIENCE unto spiritual guides and governors is a duty of great importance; the which to declare and press is very seasonable for these times, wherein so little regard is had thereto: I have therefore pitched on this text, being an apostolical precept briefly and clearly enjoining that duty; and in it we shall consider and explain these two particulars: 1. The persons to whom obedience is to be paid. 2. What that obedience doth import, or wherein it consisteth: and together with explication of the duty, we shall apply it, and urge its practice.

I. As to the persons unto whom obedience is to be performed, they are, generally speaking, all spiritual guides, or governors of the church (those *who speak to us the word of God, and who watch for our souls*,[a] as they are described in the context), expressed here by a term very significant and apposite, as implying fully the nature of their charge, the qualification of their persons, their rank, and privileges in the church, together consequently with the grounds of obligation to the correspondent duties toward them. There are in holy scripture divers names and phrases appropriate to them, each of them denoting some eminent part of their office, or some appurtenance thereto; but this seemeth of all most comprehensive; so that unto it all the rest are well reducible: the term is ἡγούμενοι, that is, *leaders*, or *guides*, or *captains;* which properly may denote the subsequent particulars in way of duty, or privilege, appertaining to them.

1. It may denote eminence of dignity, or superiority to others: that they are, as it is said of Judas and Silas in the Acts, ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν ἀδελφοῖς, *principal men among the brethren*:[b] for to *lead* implieth precedence, which is a note of superiority and pre-eminence. Hence are they styled προεστῶτες, *presidents* or prelates; οἱ πρῶτοι, *the first* or *prime* men; οἱ μείζονες *the greater*, majors, or grandees among us: *He* (saith our Lord) *that will be the first among you, let him be your servant;* and, *He that is greater among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve;* where ὁ μείζων and ὁ ἡγούμενος (the *greater* and the *leader*) are terms equivalent, or interpretative the one of the other;[c] and our Lord in those places, as he prescribeth humility of mind and demeanour, so he implieth difference of rank among his disciples: whence to render especial respect and honour to them, as to our betters, is a duty often enjoined.[d]

2. It doth imply power and authority: their superiority is not barely grounded on personal worth or fortune; it serveth not merely for order and pomp; but it standeth upon the nature of their office, and tendeth to use: they are by God's appointment enabled to exercise acts of power; to command, to judge, to check,

[n] Jer. x. 23. [o] Psal. xxxvi. 6; xcii. 5. [p] Apoc. xv. 3; xix. 2.

[a] Heb. xiii. 7, 17. [b] Acts xv. 22. [c] 1 Tim. v. 17; Rom. xii. 8; 1 Thess. v. 12; Matt. xx. 27; Luke xxii. 26. [d] Phil. ii. 29; 1 Thess. v. 13; 1 Tim. v. 17.

control, and chastise in a spiritual way, in order to spiritual ends (the regulation of God's worship and service, the preservation of order and peace, the promoting of edification in divine knowledge and holiness of life;) so are they ἡγούμενοι, as that word in common use (as the word ἡγεμὼν, of kin to it) doth signify, *captains* and *princes*, importing authority to command and rule (whence the Hebrew word, נשׂא, a *prince*, is usually rendered by it; and ὁ ἡγούμενος[e] is the title attributed to our Lord, to express his kingly function, being the same with ἀρχηγὸς, the *prince* or *captain*;) hence are they otherwise styled κυβερνήσεις (*governors*), ἐπίσκοποι (*overseers* or *superintendents*, as St. Hierome rendereth it), *pastors* (a word often signifying *rule*, and attributed to civil governors), πρεσβύτεροι, (*elders* or *senators*; the word denoteth not merely age, but office and authority), οἱ ἐπιμελοῦντες, *such as take care for*, the *curators* or *supervisors* of *the church*: hence also they are signally and specially in relation unto God styled δοῦλοι (*the servants*), διάκονοι (*the ministers*), ὑπηρέται (*the officers*), λειτουργοὶ (*the public agents*), οἰκονόμοι (*the stewards*), συνεργοὶ (*the coadjutors or assistants*), πρέσβεις (*the legates*), ἄγγελοι (*the angels* or *messengers*), *of God*;[f] which titles imply, that God by them, as his substitutes and instruments, doth administer the affairs of his spiritual kingdom: that as by secular magistrates (his vicegerents and offices) he manageth his universal temporal kingdom, or governeth all men in order to their worldly peace and prosperity; so by these spiritual magistrates he ruleth his church toward its spiritual welfare and felicity.

3. The word also doth imply direction or instruction; that is, guidance of people in the way of truth and duty, reclaiming them from error and sin: this, as it is a means hugely conducing to the design of their office, so it is a principal member thereof: whence διδάσκαλοι, *doctors*, or masters in doctrine, is a common name of them; and to be διδακτικοὶ, *able and apt to teach* (ἱκανοὶ διδάξαι, and πρόθυμοι), is a chief qualification of their persons; and to *attend on teaching*, to *be instant in preaching*, to *labour in the word and doctrine*, are their most commendable performances: hence also they are called *shepherds*, because they feed the souls of God's people with the food of wholesome instruction;[g] *watchmen*, because they observe men's ways, and warn them when they decline from right or run into danger; the *messengers* of God, because they declare God's mind and will unto them for the regulation of their practice.

4. The word further may denote exemplary practice; for to lead implieth so to go before, that he who is conducted may follow; as a captain marcheth before his troop; as a shepherd walketh before his flock, as a guide goeth before the traveller whom he directeth; hence they are said to be, and enjoined to behave themselves *as patterns of the flock*; and the people are charged to imitate and follow them.[h]

Such in general doth the word here used imply the persons to be, unto whom obedience is prescribed: but there is further some distinction to be made among them; there are degrees and subordinations in these guidances; some are in regard to different persons both empowered to guide, and obliged to follow, or obey.

The church is *acies ordinata*, a well marshalled army; wherein, under the *Captain-general of our faith and salvation* (*the Head of the body*, the sovereign Prince and Priest, the Arch-pastor, the chief *Apostle of our profession*, *and Bishop of our souls*,[i]) there are divers captains serving in fit degrees of subordination; bishops commanding larger regiments, presbyters ordering less numerous companies; all which, by the bands of common faith, of mutual charity, of holy communion and peace, being combined together, do in their respective stations

[e] Matt. ii. 6.

[f] Acts v. 31; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Acts xx. 28; Matt. ii. 6; Psal. lxxviii. 71; 1 Pet. v. 2; 2 Sam. v. 2; vii. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 24; Rom. xv. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2; iii. 9; vi. 1; xvi. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 4; Tit. i. 2; Gal. iv. 14; Apoc. i 29.

[g] Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Rom. xii. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 28; ii. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 13, 16; v. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Col. i. 28.

[h] 1 Pet. v. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Phil. iii. 17; Tit. ii. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 9, 7; Heb. iii. 7; 1 Thess. i. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 1; iv. 16.

[i] 1 Pet. v. 4; Heb. iii. 1.

govern and guide, are governed and guided: the bishops each in his precincts, guiding more immediately the priests subject to them; the priests, each guiding the people committed to his charge: all bishops and priests being guided by synods established, or congregated, upon emergent occasion; many of them ordinarily by those principal bishops, who are regularly settled in a presidency over them; according to the distinctions constituted by God and his apostles, or introduced by human prudence, as the preservation of order and peace (in various times and circumstances of things) hath seemed to require: to which subordination the two great apostles may seem to have regard, when they bid us *ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἀλλήλοις, to be subject to one another*;* their injunction at least may, according to their general intent (which aimeth at the preservation of order and peace), be well extended so far.[j]

Of this distinction there was never in ancient times made any question,[k] nor did it seem disputable in the church, except to one malecontent (Aerius), who did indeed get a name in story, but never made much noise, or obtained any vogue in the world; very few followers he found in his heterodoxy; no great body even of heretics could find cause to dissent from this point;[l] but all Arians, Macedonians, Novatians, Donatists, &c. maintained the distinction of ecclesiastical orders among themselves, and acknowledged the duty of the inferior clergy to their bishops: and no wonder, seeing it standeth upon so very firm and clear grounds; upon the reason of the case, upon the testimony of holy scripture, upon general tradition and unquestionable monuments of antiquity, upon the common judgment and practice of the greatest saints, persons most renowned for wisdom and piety in the church.

Reason plainly doth require such subordinations; for that without them it is scarce possible to preserve any durable concord or charity in Christian societies, to establish any decent harmony in the worship and service of God, to check odious scandals, to prevent or repress baneful factions, to guard our religion from being overspread with pernicious heresies, to keep the church from being shattered into numberless sects, and thence from being crumbled into nothing; in fine, for any good time to uphold the profession and practice of Christianity itself: for how, if there be not settled corporations of Christian people, having bulk and strength sufficient by joint endeavour to maintain the truth, honour, and interest of their religion; if the church should only consist of independent and incoherent particles (like dust or sand), easily scattered by any wind of opposition from without, or by any commotion within; if Christendom should be merely a Babel of confused opinions and practices; how, I say, then could Christianity subsist? how could the simple, among so discordant apprehensions, be able to discern the truth of it? how would the wise be tempted to dislike it, being so mangled and disfigured? what an object of contempt and scorn would it be to the profaner world in such a case! It needeth, therefore, considerable societies to uphold it; but no society (especially of any large extent) can abide in order and peace, under the management of equal and co-ordinate powers; without a single undivided authority, enabled to moderate affairs, and reduce them to a point, to arbitrate emergent cases of difference, to put good orders in execution, to curb the adversaries of order and peace. These things cannot be well performed where there is a parity of many concurrents, apt to dissent, and able to check each other:* no democracy can be supported without borrowing somewhat from monarchy; no body can live without a head; an army cannot be without a general, a senate without a president, a corporation without a supreme magistrate:† this all

* Ὑποτασσέσθω ἕκαστος τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καθὼς, καὶ ἐτέθη ἐν τῷ χαρίσματι αὐτοῦ.—Clem. ad Corinth. p. 49.

[j] 1 Pet. v. 5; Eph. v. 21; Phil. ii. 3.

[k] Cyp. Ep. 10, 12. [l] Eph. 27, 65.

* Ecclesiæ salus in summi Sacerdotis dignitate consistit, cui si non exors quædam, et ab omnibus eminens detur potestas, tot in ecclesia efficientur schismata, quot sacerdotes.—*Hier. in Lucif.*

Nec presbyterorum cœtus rite constitutus dici potest, in quo nullus sit *ἡγούμενος*.—*Bez. de Grad. Min.* cap. 22.

† Essentiale fuit, quod ex Dei ordinatione perpetua necesse fuit, est, et erit, ut presbyterio quispiam et loco et dignitate primus actioni gu-

experience attesteth; this even the chief impugners of episcopal presidency do by their practice confess; who for prevention of disorder have been fain of their own heads to devise ecclesiastical subordinations of classes, provinces, nations; and to appoint moderators (or temporary bishops) in their assemblies; so that reason hath forced the dissenters from the church to imitate it.

If there be not inspectors over the doctrine and manners of the common clergy, there will be many who will say and do anything; they will in teaching please their own humour, or soothe the people, to serve their own interests; they will indulge themselves in a licentious manner of life; they will clash in their doctrines, and scatter the people, and draw them into factions.

It is also very necessary for preserving the unity and communion of the parts of the catholic church; seeing single persons are much fitter to maintain correspondence, than headless bodies.

The very credit of religion doth require that there should be persons raised above the common level, and endued with eminent authority, to whose care the promoting it should be committed; for such as the persons are, who manage any profession, such will be the respect yielded thereto: if the ministers of religion be men of honour and authority, religion itself will be venerable; if *those* be mean, *that* will become contemptible.

The holy scripture also doth plainly enough countenance this distinction; for therein we have represented one angel presiding over principal churches, which contained several presbyters;[m] therein we find episcopal ordination and jurisdiction exercised; we have one bishop constituting presbyters in divers cities of his diocese; ordering all things therein concerning ecclesiastical discipline; judging presbyters, rebuking, μετὰ πασῆς ἐπιταγῆς, *with all authority* (or imperiousness, as it were; Tit. ii. 15), and reconciling offenders, secluding heretics and scandalous pesons.

In the Jewish church there were an high-priest, chief-priest, a sanhedrim, or senate, or synod.

The government of congregations among God's ancient people (which it is probable was the pattern that the apostles, no affecters of needless innovation, did follow in establishing ecclesiastical discipline among Christians) doth hereto agree; for in their synagogues, answering to our Christian churches, they had, as their elders and doctors, so over them an ἀρχισυνάγωγος, the head of the eldership, and president of the synagogue.

The primitive general use of Christians most effectually doth back the scripture, and interpret it in favour of this distinction; scarce less than demonstrating it constituted by the apostles; for how otherwise is it imaginable, that all the churches founded by the apostles, in several most distant and disjoined places (at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Alexandria, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Rome), should presently conspire in acknowledgment and use of it? how could it without apparent confederacy be formed, how could it creep in without notable clatter, how could it be admitted without considerable opposition, if it were not in the foundation of those churches laid by the apostles? How is it likely, that in those times of grievous persecution, falling chiefly upon the bishops (when to be eminent among Christians yielded slender reward, and exposed to extreme hazard; when to seek pre-eminence was in effect to court danger and trouble, torture and ruin), an ambition of irregularly advancing themselves above their bretheren should so generally prevail among the ablest and best Christians? How could those famous martyrs for the Christian truth be some of them so unconscionable as to affect, others so irresolute as to yield to such injurious encroachments? and how could all the holy Fathers (persons of so renowned, so approved wisdom and integrity) be so blind as not to discern such a corruption, or so bad as to abet it? How indeed could all God's church be so weak as to consent in judgment, so base as to comply in practice with it? In fine, how can we concieve that all the best monuments of antiquity down from the beginning (the acts, the epistles, the histories, the commentaries, the writings of all sorts, coming from the blessed martyrs and

bernandæ præsit cum eo, quod ipsi divinitus attributum est jure.—*Bez. de Min. Evang. Grad.* cap. xxiii. p. 153.

[m] Apoc. ii. 3, &c.

[n] Tit. i. 5; 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19, 20, 22, &c.

most holy confessors of our faith) should conspire to abuse us; the which do speak nothing but bishops; long catalogues and rows of bishops succeeding in this and that city; bishops contesting for the faith against pagan idolaters, and heretical corrupters of Christian doctrine; bishops here teaching and planting our religion by their labours, there suffering and watering it with their blood?

I could not but touch this point: but I cannot insist thereon; the full discussion of it, and vindication of the truth from the cavils advanced against the truth by modern dissenters from the church, having employed voluminous treatises: I shall only further add that if any man be so dully or so affectedly ignorant as not to see the reason of the case, and the dangerous consequences of rejecting this ancient form of discipline;[o] if any be so overweeningly presumptuous, as to question the faith of all history, or to disavow those monuments and that tradition, upon the testimony whereof even the truth and certainty of our religion, and all its sacred oracles, do rely; if any be so perversely contentious, as to oppose the custom and current practice of the churches through all ages down to the last age; so self-conceitedly arrogant, as to condemn or slight the judgment and practice of all the Fathers (together also with the opinion of the later most grave divines, who have judged episcopal presidency needful or expedient, where practicable;) so peevishly refractory as to thwart the settled order of that church in which he was baptized, together with the law of the country in which he was born; upon such a person we may look as one utterly invincible and intractable: so weak a judgment, and so strong a will, who can hope by reason to convert? I say no more to that point.

The ἡγούμενοι, then (the guides and governors), in our text, are, primarily, the bishops, as the superior and chief guides, each in his place according to order peaceably established; then, secondarily, the presbyters, in their station as guides inferior, together with the deacons as their assistants: such the church always hath had, and such, by God's blessing, our church now hath, toward whom the duty of obedience is to be performed.

[o] 1 Cor. xi. 16.

To the consideration of that I should now proceed: but first it seemeth expedient to remove a main obstruction to that performance; which is this: a misprision or doubt concerning the persons of our guides and governors; for in vain it would be to teach or persuade us to obey them, if we do not know who they are, or will not acknowledge them: for as in religion it is *primus Deorum cultus Deos credere*,[p] *the first worship of God, to believe God*, as Seneca saith; so it is the first part of our obedience to our governors to avow them; it is at least absolutely prerequisite thereto. It was of old a precept of St. Paul to the Thessalonians; *We beseech you, brethren, to know those who labour among you, and preside over you*:[q] and another to the Corinthians, *Submit yourselves* (saith he) *to such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth*: then he subjoineth, ἐπιγινώσκετε τοὺς τοιούτους, *acknowledge such*.[r] There were, it seemeth, those in the apostolical times who would not know or acknowledge their guides; there were even those who would not *admit* the apostles themselves, as St. John saith of Diotrephes, who *resisted their words*, as St. Paul saith of Alexander, to whom the apostles were not apostles, as St. Paul intimateth concerning some, in regard to himself;[s] there were then *pseud-apostles*, who excluded the *true apostles*, intruding themselvs into that high office:[t] no wonder, then, it may be that now, in these dregs of time, there should be many who disavow and desert their true guides, transferring the observance due to them upon bold pretenders; who are not indeed guides, but seducers; not governors, but usurpers, and sacrilegious invaders of this holy office: the duty we speak of cannot be secured without preventing or correcting this grand mistake; and this we hope to compass by representing a double character, or description, one of the *true guides*, another of the *counterfeits*; by comparing which we may easily distinguish them, and consequently be induced dutifully to avow and follow the one sort, wisely to disclaim and decline the other.

[p] Sen. Ep. 95.
[q] 1 Thess. v. 12.
[r] 1 Cor. xvi. 16. 18.
[s] 3 John 10; 2 Tim. iv. 15.
[t] 2 Cor. ix. 2; xi. 13; Phil. iii. 2.

Those, I say, then, who constantly do profess and teach that sound and wholesome doctrine, which was delivered by our Lord and his apostles in word and writing, was received by their disciples in the primitive churches, was transmitted and confirmed by general tradition, was sealed by the blood of the blessed martyrs, and propagated by the labours of the holy Fathers; the which also manifestly recommendeth and promoteth true reverence and piety toward God, justice and charity toward men, order and quiet in human societies, purity and sobriety in each man's private conversation.

Those who celebrate the true worship of God, and administer the holy mysteries of our religion in a serious, grave, decent manner, purely and without any notorious corruption, either by hurtful error, or superstitious foppery, or irreverent rudeness, to the advancement of God's honour, and edification of the participants in virtue and piety.

Those who derive their authority by a continued succession from the apostles; who are called unto, and constituted in, their office in a regular and peaceable way, agreeable to the institution of God, and the constant practice of his church; according to rules approved in the best and purest ages: who are prepared to the exercise of their function by the best education that ordinarily can be provided, under sober discipline, in the schools of the prophets, who thence by competent endowments of mind, and useful furniture of good learning, acquired by painful study, become qualified to guide and instruct the people: who, after previous examination of their abilities, and probable testimonies concerning their manners (with regard to the qualifications of incorrupt doctrine, and sober conversation prescribed by the apostles), are adjudged fit for the office; who also in a pious, grave, solemn manner, with invocation of God's blessing, *by laying on the hands of the presbytery*,[u] are admitted thereunto.

Those whose practice in guiding and governing the people of God is not managed by arbitrary, uncertain, fickle, private fancies or humours, but regulated by standing laws; framed (according to general directions extant in holy scripture) by pious and wise persons, with mature advice, in accommodation to the seasons and circumstances of things for common edification, order, and peace.

Those who, by virtue of their good principles, in their disposition and demeanour appear sober, orderly, peaceable, yielding meek submission to government, tendering the church's peace, upholding the communion of the saints, abstaining from all schismatical, turbulent, and factious practices.

Those, also, who are acknowledged by the laws of our country, an obligation to obey whom is part of that *human constitution*,[v] unto which we are in all things (not evidently repugnant to God's law) indispensably bound to submit; whom our sovereign, God's vicegerent and the nursing father of his church among us (unto whom in all things high respect, in all lawful things entire obedience, is due), doth command, and encourage us to obey.

Those, I say, to whom this character plainly doth agree, we may reasonably be assured that they are our true guides and governors, whom we are obliged to follow and obey: for what better assurance can we in reason desire? what more proper marks can be assigned to discern them by? what methods of constituting such needful officers can be settled more answerable to their design and use? how can it be evil or unsafe to follow guides authorized by such warrants, conformed to such patterns, endowed with such dispositions, acting by such principles and rules? can we mistake or miscarry by complying with the great body of God's church throughout all ages, and particularly with those great lights of the primitive church, who by the excellency of their knowledge, and the integrity of their virtue, have so illustrated our holy religion?

There are, on the other hand, sufficiently plain characters, by which we may descry seducers, and false pretenders to guide us.

Those who do ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, *teach otherwise*, or discost from the good ancient wholesome doctrine, revealed in the holy scripture, attested by universal tradition, professed, taught, maintained to death by the primitive saints and mar-

[u] 1 Tim. iii. 7, 10.

[v] 1 Pet. ii. 13.

tyrs ;[w] who affect novelties, uncouth notions, big words, and dark phrases ; who dote on curious empty speculations and idle questions, which engender strife, and yield no good fruit.

Those who ground their opinions and warrant their proceedings not by clear testimonies of divine revelation, by the dictates of sound reason, by the current authority of wise and good men, but by the suggestions of their own fancy, by the impulses of their passion and zeal, by pretences to special inspiration, by imaginary necessities, and such like fallacious rules.*

Those who, by counterfeit shows of mighty zeal and extraordinary affection, by affected forms of speech, by pleasing notions, by prophesying *smooth things*, daubing and glozing, by various artifices of flattery and fraud, attract and abuse weak and heedless people.

Those who, without any apparent commission from God, or allowable call from men, or extraordinary necessity of the case, in no legal or regular way, according to no custom received in God's church, do intrude themselves into the office, or are only assumed thereto by ignorant, unstable, giddy, factious people,† such as those of whom St. Paul saith, that *according to their own lusts, they heap up teachers to themselves, having itching ears.*[x]

Those who are not in reasonable ways fitly prepared, not duly approved, not competently authorized, not orderly admitted to the office, according to the prescriptions of God's word, and the practice of his church ; not entering into the fold by the door, but breaking through, or clambering over the fences of sober discipline.

Those who in their mind, their principles, their designs, and all their practice, appear void of that charity, that meekness, that calmness, that gravity, that sincerity, that stability, which qualify worthy and true guides: who in the disposition of their mind are froward, fierce, and stubborn ; in their principles loose and slippery ; in their designs and behaviour turbulent, disorderly, violent, deceitful : who regard not order or peace, but wantonly raise scandals, create dissensions, abet and foment disturbances in the church : who under religious appearances indulge their passions, and serve their interests, using a guise of devotion, and talk about holy things as instruments to vent wrath, envy, and spleen ; to drive forward designs of ambition and avarice : who will not submit to any certain judgment or rule, will like nothing but what their fancy suggests, will acknowledge no law but their own will ; who for no just cause, and upon any slender pretence, withdraw themselves, and seduce others from the church in which they were brought up, deserting its communion, impugning its laws, defaming its governors, endeavouring to subvert its establishment : who manage their discipline (such as it is of their own framing) unadvisedly and unsteadily, in no stable method, according to no settled rule, but as present conceit, or humour, or advantage prompteth ; so that, not being fixed in any certain judgment or practice, they soon clash with themselves, and divide from one another, incessantly roving from one sect to another ; *being carried about with divers and strange doctrines ; like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.*[y]

Those, the fruits of whose doctrine and managery amount at best only to empty *form of godliness, void of real virtue ;* while in truth they fill the minds of men with ill passions, ill surmises, ill-will ; they produce impious, unjust, and uncharitable dealing of all kinds, particularly discontentful murmurings, disobedience to magistrates, schisms and factions in the church, combustions and seditions in the state.

In fine, those who in their temper and their deportment resemble those ancient seducers, branded in the scripture, those *evil men, who did seduce, and were seduced :*[z]

* Ipsorum ordinationes temerariæ, inconstantes, leves.—*Tertull.*

† Hi sunt qui se ultro apud temerarios convenas sine divina dispositione præficiunt, qui se præpositos sine ulla ordinationis lege constituunt, qui nemine episcopatum dante episcopi sibi nomen assumunt.—*Cypr. de Un. Eccl.* p. 256.

[w] 1 Tim. vi. 3 ; i. 3, 4 ; Gal. i. 9 ; 1 Tim. i. 4 ; vi. 4, 20 ; 2 Tim. ii. 14, 16, 23 ; Tit. iii. 9 ; 2 Pet. ii. 18.

[x] 2 Tim. iv. 3.

[y] Heb. xiii. 9 ; Eph. iv. 14.

[z] 2 Tim. iii. 13.

Whose dispositions are represented in these epithets: they were ἀνυπότακτοι, *unruly*,[a] or persons indisposed and unwilling to submit to government; τολμηταὶ, αὐθάδεις, *presumptuous, and self-willed*, or self-pleasing darers: γογγυσταὶ, μεμψίμοιροι, *murmurers, complainers*, or conjunctly discontented mutineers; αὐτοκατάκριτοι, *self-condemned*, namely, by contradictious shuffling and shifting, or by excommunicating themselves from the church; γόητες, *bewitchers*, inveigling and deluding credulous people by dissimulation and specious appearances;[b] *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; being wolves in sheep's clothing, grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the servants of Christ, and ministers of righteousness; lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, revilers, truce-breakers, false accusers, traitors, heady, high-minded, vain talkers, deceivers, ignorant, unlearned, unstable*:[c]

Whose practices were; *to cause divisions and offences contrary to received doctrine; by good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple;— to swerve from charity — having turned aside to vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm: to beguile unstable souls; to lie in wait to deceive; to speak perverse things that they may draw disciples after them; to creep into houses, captivating silly women; to dote about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings; to speak swelling words of vanity; to admire persons because of advantage* (or out of private design, for self-interest;) *to subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake; to speak lies in hypocrisy; to preach Christ out of envy and strife, not out of good-will, or pure intention* (οὐχ ἁγνῶς), *not purely; to promise liberty* to their followers; *to walk disorderly* (that is, in repugnance to order settled in the church;) *to despise dominion, and without fear to reproach dignities; to speak evil* (rashly) *of those things which they know not* (which are beside their skill and cognizance;) *to separate themselves* from the church.[d]

Such persons as these, arrogating to themselves the office of guides, and pretending to lead us, we must not follow or regard; but are in reason and conscience obliged to reject and shun them, as the ministers of Satan, the pests of Christendom, the enemies and murderers of souls.[e]

It can indeed nowise be safe to follow any such leaders (whatever pretences to special illumination they hold forth, whatever specious guises of sanctity they bear) who in their doctrine or practice deflect from the great beaten roads of holy scripture, primitive tradition, and catholic practice, roving in by-paths suggested to them by their private fancies and humours, their passions and lusts, their interests and advantages: there have in all ages such counterfeit guides started up, having debauched some few heedless persons, having erected some παρασυναγωγὰς, or petty combinations against the regularly settled corporations; but never with any durable success or countenance of divine Providence; but like prodigious meteors, having caused a little gazing, and some disturbance, their sects have soon been dissipated, and have quite vanished away;[f] the authors and abettors of them being either buried in oblivion, or recorded with ignominy; like that Theudas in the speach of Gamaliel, who *rose up, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him were scattered, and brought to nought*.[g]

But let thus much suffice to have been spoken concerning the persons to whom obedience must be performed.

[a] Tit. i. 10.
[b] 2 Pet. ii. 10; Tit. iii. 10, 11; 2 Tim. iii. 13, 5.
[c] Matt. vii. 15; Acts xx. 29; 2 Cor. xi. 13, 15; 1 Tim. vi. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 16.
[d] Rom. xvi. 17, 18; (1 Tim. i. 6, 7;) Eph. iv. 14; Acts xx. 19; 2 Tim. iii. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 18; Jude 16; Tit. i. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 2; Phil. i. 15, 16; 2 Pet. ii. 19; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 11; 2 Pet. 10; Jude 8, 10, 9; 2 John 9.
[e] Tit. iii. 10; 2 Thess. iii. 6; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 5.
[f] Jude 13.
[g] Acts v. 36.

SERMON LVII.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.—*Obey them that have the rule over you.*

1 PROCEED to the duty itself, the obedience prescribed, which may (according to the extent in signification of the word πείθεσθαι) be conceived to relate either to the government, or to the doctrine, or to the conversation of the persons specified; implying, that we should obey their laws, that we should embrace their doctrine, that we should conform to their practice, according to proper limitations of such performance, respectively.

We begin with the first, as seeming chiefly intended by the words,

Obedience to eccleciastical government. What this doth import, we may understand by considering the terms whereby it is expressed, and those whereby its correlate (spiritual government) is signified; by examples and practice relating to it, by the nature and reason of the matter itself.

Beside the word πείθεσθαι (which is commonly used to signify all sorts of obedience, chiefly that which is due to governors), here is added a word serving to explain that the word ὑπείκειν, which signifieth to yield, give way, or comply; relating (as it seemeth by its being put indefinitely) to all their proceedings in matters concerning their charge. In other places, parallel to our text, it is expressed by ὑποτάσσεσθαι, the same term by which constantly the subjection due to secular powers, in all the precepts enjoining it, is expressed:[a] Ὁμοίως νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις, *In like manner* (or correspondently) saith St. Peter, *ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder*;[b] (that is, as the context shews, ye inferiors in the church obey your superiors; ὁ νεώτερος, both there and otherwhere doth signify the state of inferiority, as ὁ πρεσβύτερος importeth dignity and authority.) —And, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς τοιούτοις, *submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth*,[c] saith St. Paul; and, ἀλλήλοις ὑποτασσόμενοι, *submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God*,[d] that is, yeilding conscientiously that submission, which established order requireth from one to another: whence we may collect, that the duty consisteth in yielding submission and compliance to all laws, rules, and orders enacted by spiritual governors for the due celebration of God's worship, the promoting edification, the conserving decency, the maintenance of peace; as also to the judgments and censures in order to the same purposes administered by them.

This obedience to be due to them may likewise be inferred from the various names and titles attributed to them; such as those of prelates, superintendents, pastors, supervisors, governors, and leaders; which terms (more largely touched before) do imply command and authority of all sorts, legislative, judicial, and executive.

Such obedience also primitive practice doth assert to them: for what authority the holy apostles did assume and exercise, the same we may reasonably suppose derived to them; the same in kind, although not in peculiarity of manner (by immediate commission from Christ, with supply of extraordinary gifts and graces), and in unlimitedness of extent: for they do succeed to the apostles in charge and care over the church, each in his precinct, the apostolical office being distributed among them all.* The same titles which the apostles assumed to themselves they ascribe to their sympresbyters, requiring the same duties from them, and prescribing obedience to them in the same terms; they claimed no more power than was needful to further edification, and this is requisite that present governors also should have; their practice in government may also well be presumed exemplary to all future governors.† As, then, we see them διατάσσειν, *to order* things, and frame ecclesiastical constitutions; διορθοῦν, *to rectify* things, or reform *defects*, to *impose* observances *necessary*, or expedient to the time; to judge causes and

[a] (Tit. iii. 1; Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13.)
[b] 1 Pet. v. 5; Luke xxii. 26.
[c] 1 Cor. xvi. 16.

* Cujus in solidum singuli participes sumus —*Vide Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.*

† 2 Cor. x. 8; xiii. 10,—To ordain elders. To confirm proselytes. To exercise jurisdiction.

[d] Eph v. 21; 1 Pet. v. 5.

persons, *being ready to avenge*, or punish, *every disobedience;* to *use severity* upon occasions; with the spiritual *rod* to chastise scandalous offenders, *disorderly walkers*, persons contumacious and unconformable to their injunctions; to reject heretics, and banish notorious sinners from communion, warning the faithful to forbear conversation with them;[e] as they did challenge to themselves *an authority from Christ* to exercise these and the like acts of spiritual dominion and jurisdiction; exacting punctual obedience to them;[f] as we also see the like acts exercised by bishops, whom they did constitute to feed and rule the church;* so we may reasonably conceive all governors of the church (the heirs of their office) invested with like authority in order to the same purposes, and that correspondent obedience is due to them; so that what blame, what punishment, was due to those who disobeyed the apostles, doth in proportion belong to the transgressors of their duty toward the present governors of the church; especially considering that our Lord promised his prepetual presence and assistance to the apostles.[g]

We may further observe, that accordingly, in continual succession from the first ages, the good primitive bishops (the great patrons and propagators of our religion) did generally assume such power, and the people readily did yield obedience; wherein that one did wrongfully usurp, the other did weakly comply, were neither probable nor just to suppose: whence general tradition doth also confirm our obligation to this duty.

That this kind of obedience is required, doth also further appear from considering the reason of things, the condition of the church, the design of the Christian religion.

1. Every Christian Church is a society; no society can abide in any comely order, any steady quiet, any desirable prosperity, without government; no government can stand without correspondent obligation to submit thereto.

2. Again: The state of religion under the gospel is the kingdom of heaven; Christ our Lord is king of the church; it he visibly governeth and ordereth by the spiritual governors, as his substitutes and lieutenants (whence they peculiarly are styled his ministers, his officers, his stewards, his legates, his co-workers.) When he ascending up to God's right hand was invested with entire possession of that royal state, he settled them to administer affairs concerning that government in his place and name: *Ascending upon high, he gave gifts unto men,—He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers:*[h] he gave them, that is, he appointed them in their office, subordinate to himself, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* As to him, therefore, ruling by them, by them enacting laws, dispensing justice, maintaining order and peace, obedience is due.

3. Again: For the honour of God, the commendation of religion, and benefit of the people, it is needful, that in all religious performances things should, according to St. Paul's rule, be performed *decently, and according to order*, without unhandsome confusion and troublesome distraction:[i] this cannot be accomplished without a determination of persons, of modes, of circumstances appertaining to those performances (for how can any thing be performed decently, if every person hath not his rank and station, his office and work allotted to him; if to every thing to be done, its time, its place, its manner of performance, be not assigned, so that each one may know what, when, where, and how he must do?) Such determination must be committed to the discretion and care of some persons, empowered to frame standing laws or rules concerning it, and to see them duly executed (for all persons without delay, strife, confusion, and disturbance, cannot meddle in it:) with these persons all the rest of the body must be obliged to comply; otherwise all such determinations will be vain and ineffectual. Such order reason doth recommend in every proceeding; such order especially be-

* Episcopi successores apostolorum.—*Cypr. Ep.* 27, 69, &c.—*Ep.* 41, 75.—(Firmil.)

[e] 1 Cor. xi. 34; Tit. i. 5; Acts xv. 28; 1 Cor. v. 12; 2 Cor. x. 6; xiii. 10; 1 Cor. iv. 21; xii. 21; xiii. 2; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; Tit. iii. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 5; Rom. xvi. 17.

[f] 2 Cor. x. 8; xiii. 10.

[g] Matt. xxviii. 20.

[h] Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12.

[i] (1 Cor. xiv. 3; Tit. ii. 10;) 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

cometh the grandeur and importance of sacred things; such order God hath declared himself to approve, and love, especially in his own house, among his people, in matters relating to his service; for, *He is not* (as St. Paul saith, arguing to this purpose) *the God of confusion, but of peace, in all churches of the saints.*[j]

4. Again: It is requisite that all Christian brethren should conspire in serving God with mutual charity, hearty concord, harmonious consent; that, as the apostles so often prescribed, they *should endeavour to keep unity of spirit in the bond of peace;* that they should *be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind; that they should walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing; that with one mind and one mouth they should glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they should all speak the same thing; and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment*[k] (like those in the Acts, of whom it is said, *the multitude of believers had one heart and one soul;*) *that there should be no schisms* (divisions, or factions) *in the body;* that all dissensions, all *murmurings*, all emulations, should be discarded from the church:[l] the which precepts, secluding an obligation to obedience, would be impossible and vain; for (without continual miracle, and transforming human nature, things not to be expected from God, who apparently designeth to manage religion by ordinary ways of human prudence, his gracious assistance concurring) no durable concord in any society can ever effectually be maintained otherwise than by one public reason, will, and sentence, which may represent, connect, and comprise all; in defect of that, every one will be of a several opinion about what is best, each will be earnest for the prevalence of his model and way; there will be so many lawgivers as persons, so many differences as matters incident; nothing will pass smoothly and quietly, without bickering and jangling, and consequently without animosities and feuds: whence no unanimity, no concord, scarce any charity or good-will, can subsist.

5. Further; In consequence of these things, common edification requireth such obedience: it is the duty of governors to order all things to this end, that is, to the maintenance, encouragement, and improvement of piety; for this purpose their authority was given them, as St. Paul saith, and therefore it must be deemed thereto conducible:[m] it is indeed very necessary to edification, which, without discipline guiding the simple and ignorant, reclaiming the erroneous and presumptuous, cherishing the regular, and correcting the refractory, can nowise be promoted.

Excluding it, there can be no means of checking or redressing scandals, which to the reproach of religion, to the disgrace of the church, to the corrupting the minds, and infecting the manners of men, will spring up and spread.[n] Neither can there be any way to prevent the rise and growth of pernicious errors or heresies; the which assuredly in a state of unrestrained liberty the wanton and wicked minds of men will breed, their licentious practice will foster and propagate, to *the increase of all impiety: there mouths must be stopped*, otherwise *they will subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake; the word* of naughty seducers *will spread like a gangrene*,[o] if there be no corrosive or corrective remedy to stay its progress.

Where things are not managed in a stable, quiet, orderly way, no good practice can flourish or thrive; dissension will choke all good affections, confusion will obstruct all good proceedings; from anarchy, emulation and strife will certainly grow, and from them all sorts of wickedness; for *where* (saith St. James) there is *emulation and strife, there is confusion and every evil thing.*[p]

All those benefits which arise from holy communion in offices of piety and charity (from common prayers and praises

[j] 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

[k] Σύμψυχοι, Phil. ii. 2; Ὁμόφρονες, 1 Pet. iii. 8; Eph. iv. 3; Phil. ii. 2; i. 27; iii. 16; Rom. xv. 5, 6; xii. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Cor. i. 10.

[l] Acts iv. 32; 1 Cor. xii. 25; xi. 18; i. 11; iii. 3; 2 Cor. xii. 20; Phil. ii. 14.

[m] 2 Cor. xiii. 10; x. 8.

[n] 1 Tim. i. 19; vi. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17, 18.

[o] 2 Tim. ii. 16; Tit. i. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 17.

[p] James iii. 16.

to God, from participation in all sacred ordinances, from mutual advice, admonition, encouragement, consolation, good example), will together vanish with discipline: these depend upon the friendly union and correspondence of the members; and no such union can abide without the ligament of discipline, no such correspondence can be upheld without unanimous compliance to public order. The cement of discipline wanting, the church will not be like a *spiritual house*, compacted of *lively stones*[q] into one goodly pile; but like a company of scattered pebbles, or a heap of rubbish.

So considering the reason of things, this obedience will appear needful: to enforce the practice thereof, we may adjoin several weighty considerations.

Consider obedience, what it is, whence it springs, what it produceth; each of those respects will engage us to it.

It is in itself a thing very good and acceptable to God, very just and equal, very wise, very comely and pleasant.

It cannot but be grateful unto God, who is the God of love, of order, of peace, and therefore cannot but like the means furthering them; he cannot but be pleased to see men do their duty, especially that which regardeth his own ministers; in the respect performed to whom he is himself indeed avowed, and honoured, and obeyed.*

It is a just and equal thing, that every member of society should submit to the laws and orders of it; for every man is supposed upon those terms to enter into, and to abide in it; every man is deemed to owe such obedience, in answer to his enjoyment of privileges and partaking of advantages thereby: so, therefore, whoever pretendeth a title to those excellent immunities, benefits, and comforts, which communion with the church affordeth, it is most equal that he should contribute to its support and welfare, its honour, its peace; that consequently he should yield obedience to the orders appointed for those ends. Peculiarly equal it is in regard to our spiritual governors, who are obliged to be very solicitous and laborious in furthering our best good; who stand deeply engaged, and are responsible for the welfare of our souls: they must be contented to *spend and be spent;* to undergo any pains, any hardships, any dangers and crosses occurring in pursuance of those designs: and is it not then plainly equal (is it not indeed more than equal, doth not all ingenuity and gratitude require?) that we should encourage and comfort them in bearing those burdens, and in discharging those incumbrances, by a fair and cheerful compliance? It is the apostle's enforcement of the duty in our text: *Obey them* (saith he) *and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those who are to render an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief,* (or groaning.)

Is it not indeed extreme iniquity and ingratitude, when they with anxious care and earnest toil are endeavouring our happiness, that we should vex and trouble them by our perverse and cross behaviour?

Nay, is it not palpable folly to do thus, seeing thereby we do indispose and hinder them from effectually discharging their duty to our advantage? ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο, *for this*, addeth the Apostle, further pressing the duty, *is unprofitable to you*, or it tendeth to your disadvantage and damage; not only as involving guilt, but as inferring loss; the loss of all those spiritual benefits, which ministers being encouraged, and thence performing their office with alacrity and sprightful diligence, would procure to you: it is therefore our wisdom to be obedient, because obedience is so advantageous and profitable to us.

The same is also a comely and amiable thing, yielding much grace, procuring great honour to the church, highly adorning and crediting religon: it is a goodly sight to behold things proceeding orderly; to see every person quietly resting in his post, or moving evenly in his rank; to observe superiors calmly leading, inferiors gladly following, and equals lovingly accompanying each other: this is the Psalmist's *Ecce quam bonum! Behold how* (admirably) *good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*[r] Such a state of things argu-

* Tempus est,—ut de submissione provocent in se Dei clementiam, et de honore debito in Dei sacerdotem eliciant in se divinam misericordiam.—*Cypr. Ep.* 30.

[q] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

[r] Psal. cxxxix. 1.

eth the good temper and wisdom of persons so demeaning themselves, the excellency of the principles which do guide and act them, the goodness of the constitution which they observe; so it crediteth the church, and graceth religion; a thing which, as St. Paul teacheth, *in all things*[s] we should endeavour.

It is also a very pleasant and comfortable thing to live in obedience: by it we enjoy tranquillity of mind and satisfaction of conscience, we taste all the sweets of amity and peace, we are freed from the stings of inward remorse, we escape the grievances of discord and strife.

The causes, also, and principles from which obedience springeth, do much commend it: it ariseth from the dispositions of soul which are most Christian and most humane; from charity, humility, meekness, sobriety of mind, and calmness of passion; the which always dispose men to submiss, complaisant, peaceable demeanour toward all men, especially toward those whose relation to them claimeth such demeanour: these a genuine, free, cordial, and constant obedience, do signify to live in the soul; together with a general honesty of intention, and exemption from base designs.

In fine, innumerable and inestimable are the benefits and good fruits accruing from this practice: beside the support it manifestly yieldeth to the church, the gracefulness of order, the conveniences and pleasures of peace, it hath also a notable influence upon the common manners of men, which hardly can ever prove very bad, where the governors of the church do retain their due respect and authority; nothing more powerfully doth instigate to virtue, than the countenance of authority; nothing more effectually can restrain from exhorbitancy of vice, than the bridle of discipline: this obvious experience demonstrateth, and we shall plainly see, if we reflect upon those times when piety and virtue have most flourished. Whence was it, that in those good old times Christians did so abound in good works, that they burned with holy zeal, that they gladly would do, would suffer, any thing for their religion? whence but from a mighty respect to their superiors, from a strict regard to their direction and discipline? Did the bishops then prescribe long fasts, or impose rigid penances? willingly did the people undergo them: Did the pastor conduct into danger, did he lead them into the very jaws of death and martyrdom? the flock with a resolute alacrity did follow. Did a prelate interdict any practice scandalous or prejudicial to the church, under pain of incurring censure? every man trembled at the consequences of transgressing:* no terror of worldly power, no severity of justice, no dread of corporal punishment, had such efficacy to deter men from ill-doing, as the reproof and censure of a bishop; his frown could avail more than the menaces of an emperor, than the rage of a persecutor, than the rods and axes of an executioner: no rod indeed did smart like the spiritual rod, no sword did cut so deep as that of the Spirit; no loss was then so valuble as being deprived of spiritual advantages; no banishment was so grievous as being separated from holy communion; no sentence of death was so terrible as that which cut men off from the church; no thunder could astonish or affright men like the crack of a spiritual anathema: this was that which kept virtue in request, and vice in detestation; hence it was that men were so good, that religion did so thrive, that so frequent and so illustrious examples of piety did appear; hence indeed we may well reckon that Christianity did (under so many disadvantages and oppositions) subsist and grow up: obedience to governors was its guard; that kept the church firmly united in a body sufficiently strong to maintain itself against all assaults of faction within, of opposition from abroad; that preserved that concord, which disposed and enabled Christians to defend their religion against all fraud and violence; that cherished the true virtue, and the beautiful order, which begot veneration to religion: to it, therefore, we owe the life and growth of Christianity; so that through many sharp persecutions it hath held up its head, through so many perilous diseases it hath kept its life until this day. There were

[s] Tit. ii. 10.

* Neque hoc ita dixerim, ut negligatur ecclesiastica disciplina, et permittatur quisquam facere quod velit sine ulla correptione, et quadam medicinali vindicta, et terribili lenitate, et charitatis severitate.—*Aug. adv. Petil.* iii. 4.

not then of old any such cavils and clamours against every thing prescribed by governors; there were no such unconscionable scruples, no such hard hearted pretences to tender conscience devised to baffle the authority of superiors. Had there been such, had men then commonly been so forward and factious as now, the church had been soon shivered into pieces, our religion had been swallowed up in confusion and licentiousness.

If, again, we on the other hand fix our consideration upon disobedience (the nature; the sources, the consequences thereof,) it will, I suppose, much conduce to the same effect, of persuading us to the practice of this duty.

It is in itself a heinous sin, being the transgression of a command in nature and consequence very important, upon which God layeth great stress, which is frequently inculcated in scripture, which is fenced by divers other precepts, which is pressed by strong arguments, and backed by severe threatenings of punishment upon the transgressors.

It is in its nature a kind of apostacy from Christianity, and rebellion against our Lord; for as he that refuseth to obey the king's magistrates in administration of their office is interpreted to disclaim his authority and to design rebellion against him; so they who obstinately disobey the ministers of our Lord's spiritual kingdom do thereby appear to disavow him, to shake off his yoke, to impeach his reign over them. So doth he himself interpret and take it: *He* (saith our Lord) *that heareth you heareth me, and he that* (ὁ ἀθετῶν, that *baffleth*) *despiseth you despiseth me;* and, *If any man neglect to hear the church* (or shall disobey it, ἐὰν παρακούσῃ), *let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican:*[t] that is, such a refractory person doth by his contumacy put himself into the state of one removed from *the commonwealth of Israel*, he forfeiteth the special protection of God, he becometh as an alien or an outlaw from the kingdom of our Lord.*

Under the Mosaical dispensation, those *who would do presumptuously, and would not hearken unto the priest, that stood to minister before the Lord,*[u] did incur capital punishment; those who factiously murmured against Aaron are said to make an insurrection against God, and answerably were punished in a miraculous way (*the Lord made a new thing, the earth opened, and swallowed them up; they went down alive into the pit.*[v]) It was in the prophetical times an expression signifying height of impiety, *My people is as those who strive with the priest.*[w] Seeing, then, God hath no less regard to his peculiar servants now than he had then; seeing they no less represent him, and act by his authority now, than they did then; seeing their service is as precious to him, and as much tendeth to his honour now, as the Levitical service then did; seeing he no less loveth order and peace in the church, than he did in the synagogue; we may well suppose it a no less heinous sin, and odious to God, to despise the ministers of Christ's gospel, than it was before to despise the ministers of Moses' law.*

It is a sin indeed pregnant with divers sins, and involving the breach of many great commands, which are frequently proposed and pressed in the New Testament, with design in great part to guard and secure it: that of *doing all things in charity;* of *doing all things without murmurings and dissensions;* of *pursuing peace so far as lieth in us;*[x] of maintaining unity, concord, unanimity in devotion; of avoiding schisms, and dissensions, and the like: which are all notoriously violated by this disobedience; it includeth the most high breach of charity, the most formal infringing of peace, the most scandalous kind of discord that can be, to cross our superiors.†

It is also a practice issuing from the worst dispositions of soul, such as are most opposite to the spirit of our religion, and indeed very repugnant to common

* Nec putent sibi vitæ aut salutis constare rationem, si episcopis et sacerdotibus obtemperare noluerint; cum in Deutron. Deus dicat, &c.—*Cypr. Ep.* 61.

[t] Luke x. 16; Matt. x. 40; xii. 17.

* Quo exemplo ostenditur, et probatur obnoxios omnes et culpæ et pœnæ futuros, qui se schismaticis contra præpositos et sacerdotes irreligiosa temeritate miscuerint.—*Cypr. Ep.* 76.

† An esse sibi cum Christo videtur, qui adversus sacerdotes Christi facit? &c.—*Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.* p. 258.

[u] Deut. xvii. 12.

[v] Num. xvi. 11, 30. [w] Hos. iv. 4.

[x] 1 Cor. xvi. 14; Phil. ii. 14; Rom. xii. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Heb. xii. 14; Mark ix. 10.

reason and humanity; from a proud haughtiness or vain wantonness of mind; from the irregularity of unmortified and unbridled passion; from exhorbitant selfishness (selfishness of every bad kind, self-conceit, self-will, self-interest), from turbulent animosity, froward crossness of humour, rancorous spite, perverse obstinacy; from envy, ambition, avarice, and the like ill sources, the worst fruits of the flesh and corrupt nature: to such dispositions the rejecting God's prophets of old, and the noncompliance with the apostles, are ascribed in scripture; and from the same the like neglect of God's messengers now doth proceed; as whoever will observe may easily discern: do but mind the discourses of factious people, you shall perceive them all to breathe generally nothing but ill-nature.

The fruits also which it produceth are extremely bad; manifold great inconveniences and mischiefs, hugely prejudicing the interest of religion and the welfare of the church.

It is immediately and formally a violation of order and peace; whence all the woful consequences of disorder and faction do adhere thereto.*

It breedeth great disgrace to the church and scandal to religion; for what can appear more ugly than to see among the professors of religion children opposing their fathers, scholars contesting with their masters, inferiors slighting and crossing their superiors? what can more expose the church and religion to the contempt, to the derision of atheists and infidels, of profane and lewd persons, of wild heretics and schismatics, of all enemies unto truth and piety, than such foul irregularity?†

It corrupteth the minds and manners of men: for when that discipline is relaxed which was ordained to guard truth and promote holiness; when men are grown so licentious and stubborn as to contemn their superiors, to disregard their wholesome laws and sober advice, there can be no curb to restrain them, but down precipitantly they run into all kind of vicious irregularities and excesses;* when those mounds are taken away, whither will men ramble? when those banks are broken down, what can we expect but deluges of impious doctrine and wicked practice to overflow the ignorant and inconsiderate people?

Doth not indeed this practice evidently tend to the dissolution of the church and destruction of Christianity? for when the *shepherds* are (as to conduct and efficacy) *taken away*, will *not the sheep be scattered*, or *wander astray, like sheep without a shepherd*,? being bewildered in various errors, and exposed as a prey to any wild beasts; to *the grievous wolves*, to *the ravenous lions*, to the wily foxes? here a fanatical enthusiast will snap them, there a profane libertine will worry them, there again a desperate atheist will tear and devour.†

Consult we but obvious experience, and we shall see what spoils and ruins of faith, of good conscience, of common honesty and sobriety, this practice hath in a few years caused; how have atheism and infidelity, how have profaneness and dissoluteness of manners, how have all kinds of dishonesty and baseness grown up since men began to disregard the authority of their spiritual guides! what dismal tragedies have we in our age beheld acted upon this stage of our own country! what bloody wars and murders (murders of princes, of nobles, of bishops and priests!) what miserable oppressions, extortions, and rapines! what execrable seditions and rebellions! what barbarous animosities and feuds! what abominable treasons, sacrileges, perjuries, blasphemies! what horrible violations of all justice and honesty! And what, I pray, was the source of these things? where did they begin? where but at murmuring against, at rejecting,

* *Vide* Cypr. Ep. 55. Neque enim aliunde, &c.

† Inde schismata, et hæreses obortæ sunt, et oriuntur, dum episcopus, qui unus est, et ecclesiæ præest superba quorundam præsumptione contemnitur.—*Cypr. Ep.* 69.

Hæc sunt initia hæreticorum, et ortus atque conatus schismaticorum male cogitantium ut sibi placeant, ut præpositum superbo tumore contemnant. Sic de ecclesia receditur, sic altare profanum foris collocatur, sic contra pacem Christi, atque unitatem Dei rebelliatur.—*Cypr. Ep.* 65.

* Ecclesiæ gloria præpositi gloria est.—*Cypr. Ep.* 7, 55.

† Τοῦτο πάντων τῶν κακῶν αἴτιον, ὅτι τὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἠφανίσθη, οὐδεμία αἰδώς, οὐδεὶς φόβος, &c.—Chris. in 2 Tim. Or. 2.

, Matt. xxvi. 31.

at persecuting the spiritual governors, at casting down and trampling on their authority, at slighting and spurning at their advice? Surely, would men have observed the laws, or have hearkened to the counsels of those grave and sober persons whom God had appointed to direct them, they never would have run into the commission of such enormities.

It is not to be omitted, that, in the present state of things, the guilt of disobedience to spiritual governors is increased and aggravated by the supervenient guilt of another disobedience to the laws of our prince and country. Before the secular powers (unto whom God hath committed the dispensation of justice, with the maintenance of peace and order, in reference to worldly affairs) did submit to our Lord, and became *nursing parents of the church*, the power of managing ecclesiastical matters did wholly reside in spiritual guides; unto whom Christians, as the *peculiar* subjects of God, were obliged willingly to yield obedience; and, refusing it, were guilty before God of spiritual disorder, faction or schism: but now, after that political authority (out of pious zeal for God's service, out of a wise care to prevent the influences of disorder in spiritual matters upon the temporal peace, out of grateful return for the advantages the commonwealth enjoyeth from religion and the church) hath pleased to back and fortify the laws of spiritual governors by civil sanctions, the knot of our obligation is tied faster, its force is redoubled, we by disobedience incur a double guilt and offend God two ways, both as supreme Governor of the world, and as King of the church; to our schism against the church we add rebellion against our prince, and so become no less bad citizens than bad Christians. Some may perhaps imagine their disobedience hence more excusable, taking themselves now only thereby to transgress a political sanction: but (beside that even that were a great offence, the command of our temporal governors being sufficient, out of conscience to God's express will, to oblige us in all things not evidently repugnant to God's law) it is a great mistake to think the civil law doth anywise derogate from the ecclesiastical; that doth not swallow this up, but succoureth and corroborateth it; their concurrence yieldeth an accession of weight and strength to each; they do not by conspiring to prescribe the same thing either of them cease to be governors, as to right; but in efficacy the authority of both should thence be augmented, seeing the obligation to obedience is multiplied upon their subject; and to disobey them is now two crimes, which otherwise should be but one.

SERMON LVIII.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.—*Obey them that have the rule over you.*

SUCH is the nature or this duty, and such are the reasons enforcing the practice thereof: I shall only further remove two impediments of that practice, and so leave this point.

1. One hindrance of obedience is this, that spiritual power is not despotical or compulsory, but parental or pastoral; that it hath no external force to abet it, or to avenge disobedience to its laws: they must not *κατεξουσιάζειν*, or *κατακυριεύειν* (be imperious, or domineer), they are not allowed to exercise violence, or to inflict bodily correction,*[a] but must rule in meek and gentle ways, directly influential upon the mind and conscience (ways of rational persuasion, exhortation, admonition, reproof,) *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;—convincing, rebuking, exhorting, with all longsuffering and doctrine;*[b] their word is their only weapon, their force of argument all the constraint they apply: hence men commonly do not stand in awe of them, nor are so sensible of their obligation to obey them: they cannot understand why they should be frighted by words, or controlled by an unarmed authority.

But this in truth (things being duly

* Μάλιστα γὰρ ἁπάντων Χριστιανοίς οὐκ ἐφεῖται πρὸς βίαν ἐπανορθοῦν τὰ τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων πταίσματα, &c.—Chrys. de Sacerd. 2.

Ἐνταῦθα οὐ βιαζόμενον, ἀλλὰ πείθοντα δεῖ ποιεῖν ἀμείνω τὸν τοιοῦτον.—Ibid.

[a] Matt. xx. 25; Luke xxii. 26; 1 Pet. v. 3.

[b] 2 Tim. ii. 25; iv. 2; 1 Tim. iii. 3.

considered) is so far from diminishing our obligation, or arguing the authority of our governors to be weak and precarious, that it rendereth our obligation much greater, and their authority more dreadful; for the sweeter and gentler their way of governing is, the more disingenuous and unworthy a thing it is to disobey it; not to be persuaded by reason, not to be allured by kindness, not to admit friendly advice, not to comply with the calmest methods of furthering our own good, is a brutish thing; he that only can be scared and scourged to duty, scarce deserveth the name of a man: it therefore doth the more oblige us, that in this way we are moved to action by love rather than fear. Yet if we would fear wisely and justly (not like children, being frighted with formidable shapes and appearances, but like men, apprehending the real consequences of things), we should the more fear these spiritual powers, because they are insensible: for that God hath commanded us to obey them, without assigning visible forces to constrain or chastise, is a manifest argument that he hath reserved the vindication of their authority to his own hand, which therefore will be infallibly certain, and terribly severe; so the nature of the case requireth, and so God hath declared it shall be: the sentence that is upon earth pronounced by his ministers upon contumacious offenders, he hath declared himself ready to ratify in heaven, and therefore most assuredly will execute it.[c] As under the old law God appointed to the transgression of some laws, upon which he laid special stress, the punishment of *being cut off from his people;* the execution of which punishment he reserved to himself, to be accomplished in his own way and time; so doth he now in like manner take upon him to maintain the cause of his ministers, and to execute the judgments decreed by them; and, if so, we may consider that *it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*[d] Ecclesiastical authority, therefore, is not a shadow, void of substance or force, but hath the greatest power in the world to support and assert it; it hath arms to maintain it most effectual and forcible (those of which St. Paul saith, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God—;*") it inflicteth chastisements far more dreadful than any secular power can inflict; for these only touch the body, those pierce the soul; these concern only our temporal state, those reach eternity itself; these at most yield a transitory smart, or kill the body, those produce endless torment, and (utterly as to all comfort in being) destroy the soul.

The punishment for extreme contumacy is called *delivery to Satan;* and is not this far worse than to be put into the hands of any gaoler or hangman?* What are any cords of hemp or fetters of iron in comparison to those bands, of which it is said, *Whatever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;* which engage the soul in a guilt never to be loosed, except by sore contrition and serious repentance? what are any scourges to St. Paul's rod, lashing the heart and conscience with stinging remorse? what any axes or falchions to that *sword of the Spirit*, which cutteth off a member from the body of Christ? what are any fagots and torches to that unquenchable *fire and brimstone* of the infernal lake? what, in fine, doth any condemnation here signify to that horrible curse, which devoteth an incorrigible soul to the bottomless pit?

It is therefore indeed a great advantage to this power that it is spiritual.

2. Another grand obstruction to the practice of this duty is, pretence to scruple about the lawfulness, or dissatisfaction in the expedience of that which our governors prescribe; that we are able to advance objections against their decrees; that we can espy inconveniences ensuing upon their orders; that we imagine the constitution may be reformed so as to become more pure, more convenient and comely, more serviceable to edification; that we cannot fancy that to be best which they enjoin: for removing this obstruction, let me only propound some questions.

Were not any government appointed in vain, if such pretences might exempt

* Spiritali gladio superbi et contumaces necantur, dum de ecclesia ejiciuntur.—*Cypr. Ep.* 61.

[c] Matt. xviii. 18. [d] Heb. x. 31. [e] 2 Cor. x. 4. [f] Cypr. Ep. 50, 52, (p. 97.)

or excuse from conformity to its orders?* can such ever be wanting? Is there any thing devisable, which may not be impugned by some plausible reason, which may not disgust a squeamish humour? Is there any matter so clearly innocent, the lawfulness whereof a weak mind will not question; any thing so firm and solid, in which a small acuteness of wit cannot pick a hole; any thing so indisputably certain, that whoever affecteth to cavil may not easily devise some objections against it?

Is there any thing here that hath no inconveniences attending it? are not in all human things conveniences and inconveniences so mixed and complicated, that it is impossible to disentangle and sever them? can there be any constitution under heaven so absolutely pure and perfect, that no blemish or defect shall appear therein? can any providence of man foresee, any care prevent, any industry remedy, all inconveniences possible? Is a reformation satisfactory to all fancies any wise practicable; and are they not fitter to live in the Platonic idea of a commonwealth than in any real society, who press for such an one? To be facile and complaisant in other cases, bearing with things which do not please us, is esteemed commendable, a courteous and humane practice: why should it not be much more reasonable to condescend to our superiors, and comport with their practice? is it not very discourteous to deny them the respect which we allow to others, or to refuse that advantage to public transactions which we think fit to grant unto private conversation?

To what purpose did God institute a government, if the resolutions thereof must be suspended till every man is satisfied with them; or if its state must be altered so often as any man can pick in it matter of offence or dislike; or if the proceedings thereof must be shaped according to the numberless varieties of different and repugnant fancies? †

Are, I pray, the objections against obedience so clear and cogent as are the commands which enjoin, and the reasons which enforce it? are the inconveniences adhering to it apparently so grievous as are the mischiefs which spring from disobedience? do they in a just balance counterpoise the disparagement of authority, the violation of order, the disturbance of peace, the obstruction of edification, which disobedience produceth?

Do the scruples (or reasons, if we will call them so) which we propound, amount to such a strength and evidence, as to outweigh the judgment of those whom God hath authorized by his commission, whom he doth enable by his grace, to instruct and guide us?* May not those, whose office it is to judge of such things, whose business it is to study for skill in order to that purpose, who have most experience in those affairs specially belonging to them, be reasonably deemed most able to judge both for themselves and us what is lawful and what expedient? have they not eyes to see what we do, and hearts to judge concerning the force of our pretences, as well as we?

Is it not a design of their office to resolve our doubts and void our scruples in such cases, that we may act securely and quietly, being directed by better judgments than our own?† Are they not strictly obliged in conscience, are they not deeply engaged by interest, to govern us in the best manner? Is it therefore wisdom, is it modesty, is it justice for us to advance our private conceits against their most deliberate public resolutions? may we not in so doing mistake? may we not be blind or weak (not to say fond, or proud, or perverse?) and shall those defects or defaults of ours evacuate so many commands of God, and render his so noble, so needful an ordinance quite insignificant?

Do we especially seem to be in earnest, or appear otherwise than illusively to palliate our naughty affections and sinister respects, when we ground the justification of our nonconformity upon dark

* *Φιλοίνοις οἶνος οὐ λείπει, οὐδὲ φιλονείκῳ μάχη.* —Socr. Hist. vii. 31.

† *Οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὴν ἀρίστην (πολιτείαν) δεῖ θε-ρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν δυνατήν.*—Arist. Pol. iv. 1.—— Si ubi jubeantur quærere singulis liceat; pereunte obsequio etiam imperium interc.dit.—*Tac.* 1. p. 450, *Otho.*

* Dixisti sane scrupulum tibi esse tollendum de animo, in quem incidisti; Incidisti sed tua credulitate irreligiosa, &c.—*Cypr. Ep.* 69. (ad Florent.) *vide* optime et apposite de hac re disserentem.

† Qui fidei et veritati præsumus.—*Cypr. Ep.* 72.

subtilties and intricate quirks; which it is hard to conceive that we understand ourselves, and whereof very perspicacious men cannot apprehend the force? Do we think we shall be innocent men, because we are smart sophisters? or that God will excuse us from our duty, because we can perplex men with our discourses? or that we are bound to do nothing, because we are able to say somewhat against all things?

Would we not do well to consider what huge danger they incur, and how massy a load of guilt they must undergo, upon whom shall be charged all those sad disorders and horrid mischiefs which are naturally consequent on disobedience? What if confusion of things, if corruption of manners, if oppression of truth, if dissolution of the church, do thence ensue; what a case, then, shall we be in, who confer so much thereto? Would not such considerations be apt to beget scruples far more disquieting an honest and truly conscientious mind, than any such either profound subtilties or superficial plausibilities can do, which dissenters are wont to allege? For needeth he not to have extreme reason (reason extremely strong and evident) who dareth to refuse that obedience which God so plainly commandeth; by which his own authority is maintained; on which the safety, prosperity, and peace of the church dependeth; in which the support of religion, and the welfare of numberless souls is deeply concerned?

Did, let me further ask, the apostles, when they settled orders in the church, when they imposed what they conceived needful for edification and decency, when they inflicted spiritual chastisements upon disorderly walkers, regard such pretences? or had those self-conceited and self-willed people (who *obeyed not their words*, but *resisted* and rejected them) no such pretences? had they nothing, think we, to say for themselves, nothing to object against the apostolic orders and proceedings? They had surely; they failed not to find faults in the establishment, and to pretend a kind of tender conscience for their disobedience; yet this hindered not, but that the apostles condemned their misbehaviour and inflicted severe censures upon them?

Did not also the primitive bishops (and all spiritual governors down from the beginning every where almost to these days of contention and disorder (proceed in the same course; not fearing to enact such laws concerning indifferent matters and circumstances of religion, as seemed to them conducible to the good of the church? Did not all good people readily comply with their orders, how painful soever, or disagreeable to flesh and blood, without contest or scruple? yet had not they as much wit, and no less conscience than ourselves? They who had wisdom enough to descry the truth of our religion through all the clouds of obloquy and disgrace, which it lay under; who had zeal and constancy to bear the hardest brunts of persecution against it; were they such fools as to see no fault, so stupid as to resent nothing, or so loose as to comply with any thing? No, surely; they were in truth so wise as to know their duty, and so honest as to observe it.

If these considerations will not satisfy, I have done; and proceed to the next point of our duty, to which the precept in our text may extend, concerning the doctrine of our guides; in which respect it may be conceived to imply the following particulars to be performed by us, as instances, or parts, or degrees thereof.

1. We should readily and gladly address ourselves to hear them; not out of profane and wilful contempt or slothful negligence declining to attend upon their instructions: there were of old those, of whom the prophets complain, who would not so much as hearken to the words of those whom God sent unto them; but stopped their ears, *withdrew the shoulder*, *and hardened the neck*, *and would not hear*:[a] there were those in the evangelical times, who did ἀπωθεῖσθαι τὸν λόγον, *thrust away the word of God*, *judging themselves unworthy of eternal life*; *who would not admit or hear the word of life*, and overtures of grace propounded by the apostles: there were Gadarenes, who beseeched our Lord himself to de-

[a] 2 Tim. iv. 15; 1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Thess. iii. 14, 6

[a] Neh. ix. 29; Prov. i. 24; Isa. lxv. 12; lxvi. 4; Jer. vii. 13, vi. 10

[b] Acts xiii. 46; Matt. x. 14

part from their coasts:[j] there have always been *deaf adders, who stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely*;[k] no wonder then if now there be those who will not so much as allow a hearing to the messengers of God, and the guides of their soul: some out of a factious prejudice against their office, or their persons, or their way, do shun them, giving themselves over to the conduct of seducers; some out of a profane neglect of all religion, out of being wholly possessed with worldly cares and desires, out of stupidity and sloth (in disposing them to mind any thing that is serious), will not afford them any regard: all these are extremely blameable, offensive to God, and injurious to themselves. It is a heinous affront to God (implying an hostile disposition toward him, an unwillingness to have any correspondence with him) to refuse so much as audience to his ambassadors; it is an interpretative repulsing him: so of old he expressed it; *I* (saith he) *spake unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called you, but ye answered not*:[l] so under the gospel; *He* (saith our Lord) *that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth* (or regardeth not) *you despiseth me*;[m] and, *We are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.*[n] It is a starving our souls, depriving them of that food which God hath provided for them; it is keeping ourselves at distance from any means or possibility of being well informed and quickened to the practice of our duty, of being reclaimed from our errors and sins; it is the way to become hardened in impiety, or sinking into a reprobate sense. This is the first step to obedience; for *how can we believe, except we hear?* this is that which St. James urgeth, *Let every man be quick to hear*:[o] and which St. Peter thus enjoineth, *Like newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby*:[p] we should especially be quick and ready to hear those whom God hath authorized and appointed to speak; we should *desire to suck the milk of the word* from those who are our spiritual parents and nurses.

2. We should hear them with serious earnest attention and consideration; so that we may well understand, may be able to weigh, may retain in memory, and may become duly affected with their discourses; we must not hear them drowsily and slightly, as if we were nothing concerned, or were hearing an impertinent tale; their word should not pass through the ears, and slip away without effect; but sink into the understanding, into the memory, into the heart; like *the good seed* falling into *a depth of earth*,[q] able to afford it root and nourishment; therefore we must attend diligently thereto: περισσοτέρως οὖν δεῖ προσέχειν, *we should therefore give more abundant heed* (as the apostle saith) *to the things we hear, lest at any time we should let them slip.*[r] This duty the nature and importance of their word requireth: *it is the word not of men*, but, *in truth, the word* of the great *God*,[s] (his word as proceeding from him, as declaring his mind and will, as tendering his overtures of grace and mercy) which as such challengeth great regard and awe; it informeth us of our chief duties, it furthereth our main interests, it guideth us into, it urgeth us forward in the way to eternal happiness; it is the word that is *able to save our souls*, to *render us wise unto salvation*;[t] it therefore claimeth and deserveth from us most earnest attention; it is a great indignity and folly not to yield it.

3. We should to their instructions bring good dispositions of mind, such as may render them most effectual and fruitful to us; such as are right intention, candour, docility, meekness.

We should not be induced to hear them out of curiosity (as *having itching ears*), being desirous to hear *some new things*, some fine notions, some taking discourse; somewhat to fancy or talk pleasantly about (as the Athenians heard St. Paul;[u]) not out of censoriousness, or inclination to criticise and find fault, (as the Pharisees heard our Saviour, *laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might*

[j] Luke viii. 37.
[k] Psal. lviii. 4, 5.
[l] Jer. vii. 13
[m] Luke x. 16.
[n] 2 Cor. v. 20.
[o] James i. 19.
[p] 1 Pet. ii. 2.
[q] Matt. xiii. 5.
[r] Heb. ii. 1.
[s] 1 Thess. ii. 13.
[t] James i. 21.
[u] Acts xvii. 21.

accuse him ;[v]) not out of design to gratify our passions in hearing them, to reprove other persons, or for any such corrupt and sinister intention ; but altogether out of pure design that we may be improved in knowledge, and excited to the practice of our duty.

We should not come to hear them with minds imbued with ill prejudices and partial affections, which may obstruct the virtue and efficacy of their discourse, or may hinder us from judging fairly and truly about what they say ; but with such freedom and ingenuity as may dispose us readily to yield unto and acquiesce in any profitable truth declared by them ; like the generous Bereans, who *received the word μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, with all* alacrity and *readiness of mind. searching the scriptures daily, whether these things were so ;*[w] *ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη, like infants newly born,*[x] that come to the dug without any other inclination than to suck what is needful for their sustenance.

We should be docile and tractable, willing and apt to learn, shaking off all those indispositions of soul (all dulness and sluggishness, all peevishness and perverseness, all pride and self-conceitedness, all corrupt affection and indulgence to our conceits, our humours, our passions, our lusts and inordinate desires) which may obstruct our understanding of the word, our yielding assent to it, our receiving impression from it : there were those, concerning whom the apostle said, that he could not proceed in his discourse, because they were *νωθροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς, dull of hearing,*[y] (or sluggish in hearing), who were indisposed to hear, and uncapable to understand, because they would not be at the pains to rouse up their fancies, and fix their minds upon a serious consideration of things ; there were those who had *a spirit of slumber, eyes not to see, and ears not to hear ;* who *did hear with the ear, but not understand ; seeing did see, but not perceive ; for their heart had waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes were closed ;*[z] such indocile persons there always have been, who, being stupified and perverted by corrupt affections, became uncapable of bettering from good instruction : all such we should strive to free ourselves from, that we may perform this duty to our guides, and *in meekness receive the engrafted word.*[a]

These practices (of hearing, of attending, of coming well disposed to instruction) are at least steps and degrees necessarily prerequisite to the obedience prescribed ; and further to press them all together upon us, we may consider, that it is strictly incumbent on them (under danger of heavy punishment and *wo*) *willingly*, earnestly, with all diligence and patience, to *labour* in teaching, and admonishing us ; they must *give attendance* and *take heed unto their doctrine*, that it may be *sound* and profitable ; they *must preach the word*, and *be instant* upon it *in season, out of season* (that is, not only taking, but seeking and snatching all occasions to do it), *reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering and doctrine ;*[b] they *must warn every man and teach every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus :*[c] as they are obliged in such manner to do these things, so there must be correspondent duties lying upon us, to receive their doctrine readily, carefully, patiently, sincerely, and fairly : as they must be faithful dispensers of God's heavenly truth and holy mysteries, so we must be obsequious entertainers of them :[d] imposing such commands on them doth imply reciprocal obligations in their hearers and scholars ; otherwise their office would be vain, and their endeavours fruitless : God no less would be frustrated in his design, than we should be deprived of the advantages of their institution.

But further, it is a more immediate ingredient of this duty, that,

1. We should effectually be enlightened by their doctrine, be convinced by their arguments persuading truth and duty, be moved by their admonitions and exhortations to good practice ; we should open our eyes to the light which they shed forth upon us, we should surrender

[v] Luke xi. 54.
[w] Acts xvii. 11. [x] 1 Pet. ii. 2.
[y] Heb. v. 11 ; (1 Cor. iii. 2)
[z] Isa. xxix. 10 ; Rom. xi. 8 ; Isa. vi. 9 ; Acts xxviii. 26 ; John xii. 40.
[a] James i. 21.
[b] 1 Cor. ix. 16 ; 2 Cor. v. 14 ; 1 Pet. v. 2 ; Rom. xii. 3 ; 1 Tim. v. 17 ; iv. 13. 16 ; 2 Tim. iv. 2. [c] Col. i. 28.
[d] 1 Cor. iv. 2.

our judgment to the proofs which they allege, we should yield our hearts and affections pliable to their mollifying and warming discourses: it is their part to subdue our minds to *the obedience of faith*, and to subject our wills to the observance of God's commandments (*casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*) it must therefore answerably be our duty not to resist, not to hold out, not to persist obstinate in our errors or prejudices; to submit our minds to the power of truth, being willingly and gladly conquered by it; it must be our duty to subjugate our wills, to bend our inclinations, to form our affections to a free compliance of heart with the duties urged upon us; we should not be like those disciples, of whom our Lord complaineth thus; *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*[f] nor like the Jews, with whom St. Stephen thus expostulates; *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.*[g] They should speak with power and efficacy; we therefore should not by our indispositions (by obstinacy of conceit or hardness of heart) obstruct their endeavours: they should be *co-workers of your joy* (that is working in us that faith and those virtues, which are productive of true joy and comfort to us;) we therefore should co-work with them toward the same end: they should edify us in knowledge and holiness; we should therefore yield ourselves to be fashioned and polished by them.

5. We should, in fine, obey their doctrine by conforming our practice thereto: this our Lord prescribed in regard even to the Jewish guides and doctors: *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all therefore whatsoever, they bid you observe, that observe and do.*[i] The same we may well conceive that he requireth in respect to his own ministers, the teachers of a better law, authorized to direct us by his own commission, and thereto more especially qualified by his grace. This is indeed the crown and completion of all: to hear, signifieth nothing; to be convinced in our mind, and to be affected in our heart, will but aggravate our guilt, if we neglect practice; every sermon we hear, that sheweth us our duty, will in effect be an indictment upon us, will ground a sentence of condemnation, if we transgress it: for, as *the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God, so that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, and its end is to be burned:*[j] and, *Not the hearers of the law are just with God, but the doers of the law shall be justified:*[k] And it is a good advice, that of St. James; *Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves:*[l] it is, he intimateth, a fallacy some are apt to put upon themselves, to conceit they have done sufficiently when they have lent an ear to the world; this is the least part to be done in regard to it, practice is all in all: what is it to be shewed the way, and to know it exactly, if we do not walk in it, if we do not by it arrive to our journey's end, the salvation of our souls? To have waited upon our Lord himself, and hung upon his discourse, was not available; for when in the day of account some shall begin to allege, *We have eaten and drunk before thee, and thou hast taught in our streets; our Lord will say, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.*[m] And it is our Lord's declaration in the case, *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: — but every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.*[n]

Many are very earnest to hear; they *hear gladly*, as Herod did St. John Baptist's homilies; they *receive the word with joy*, as the *temporary believers* in the parable did;[o] they do, as those men did in the prophet, *delight to know God's ways, do ask of God the ordinances of justice,*

[a] 2 Cor. x. 5.
[f] Luke xxiv. 25.
[g] Acts vii. 51; 1 Cor. iv. 20; ii. 4.
[h] 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Cor. iii. 5.
[i] Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.
[j] Heb. vi. 7, 8; x. 26.
[k] Rom. ii. 13.
[l] James i. 22.
[m] Luke xiii. 26, 27.
[n] Matt. vii. 24; (John xiv. 21.)
[o] Mark vi. 20; Matt. xiii. 20.

do take delight in approaching God; or as those in another prophet, *who speak one to another every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord: and they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness: and lo, thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not:*[p] they for a time *rejoice in the light of God's* messengers as those Jews did in the light of that *burning and shining lamp*, St. John the Baptist;[q] but all comes to nothing; but they are backward and careless to perform, at least more than they please themselves, or what suiteth to their fancy, their humour, their appetite, their interest: many hearers will believe only what they like, or what suiteth to their prejudices and passions; many of what they believe will practise that only which sorteth with their temper, or will serve their designs; they cannot conform to unpleasant and unprofitable doctrines: sometimes care choketh the word; sometimes temptation of pleasure, of profit, of honour, allureth; sometimes difficulties, hazards, persecutions, discourage from obedience to it.

These particulars are obvious, and by most will be consented to: there is one point which perhaps will more hardly be admitted, which therefore I shall more largely insist upon; it is this:

6. That as in all cases it is our duty to defer much regard to the opinion of our guides, so in some cases it behoveth us to rely barely upon their judgment and advice: those especially among them who excel in dignity and worth, who are approved for wisdom and integrity; their definitions, or the declarations of their opinion (especially such as are exhibited upon mature deliberation and debate, in a solemn manner), are ever very probable arguments of truth and expediency; they are commonly the best arguments which can be had in some matters, especially to the meaner and simpler sort of people. This upon many accounts will appear reasonable.

It is evident to experience, that every man is not capable to judge, or able to guide himself in matters of this nature (concerning divine truth and conscience.) There are *children in understanding;* there are men *weak in faith* (or knowledge concerning the faith;) there are *idiots*, ἄκακοι (men not bad, but *simple*), persons *occupying the room of the unlearned, unskilful in the word of righteousness*, who, as the apostle saith, *need that one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God.*[r]

The vulgar sort of men are as undiscerning and injudicious in all thing, so peculiarly in matters of this nature, so much abstracted from common sense and experience;* whence we see them easily seduced into the fondest conceits and wildest courses by any slender artifice or fair pretence; *like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*[s]

There are also some particular cases, a competent information and skill in which must depend upon improvements of mind acquired by more than ordinary study and experience; so that in them most people do want sufficient means of attaining knowledge requisite to guide their judgment or their practice: and for such persons in such cases it is plainly the best, the wisest, and the safest way, to rely upon the direction of their guides, assenting to what they declare, acting what they prescribe, going whither they conduct.†

The very notion of guides, and the design of their office, doth import a difference of knowledge, and a need of reliance upon them in such cases; it signifieth that we are in some measure igno-

[p] Isa. lviii. 2; Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31, 32.
[q] John v. 35.

* Vulgo non judicium, non veritas.—*Tac.* Ἄκριτον ὁ δῆμος. M. Ant.

† Ἀλλ' εἰδότες ἰσίρους βέλτιον εἶναι τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἡνίας ἐνδιδόναι τεχνιτωτέροις, ἢ ἄλλων ἡνιόχους εἶναι ἀνεπιστήμονας, καὶ ἀκουν ὑποτίθεσθαι μᾶλλον εὐγωμίαν, ἢ γλῶσσαν κινεῖν ἀπαιδεύτων.—Naz. Or. 1.

——fide validus, et virtute robustus, &c.—*Cypr. Ep* 23. *de Luciano.*

[r] Rom. xiv. 1; xv. 1, &c. xvi 18; 1 Cor. xiv. 16; iii. 2, viii. 10; Heb. v. 12.
[s] Eph. iv. 14.

rant of the way, and that they better know it; and if so, plain reason dictateth it fit that we should follow them: and indeed what need were there of guides, to what purpose should we have them, if we can sufficiently ken the way, and judge what we should do without them?

In the state of learning (in which the assigning us teachers supposeth us placed), whatever our capacity may be, yet our judgment at least (for want of a full comprehension of things, which must be discovered in order and by degrees) is imperfect; in that state, therefore, it becometh us not to pretend exercise of judgment, but rather easily to yield assent to what our teachers, who see further into the thing, do assert; *The learner* (as Seneca saith) *is bound to be ruled, while he beginneth to be able to rule himself.**

Δεῖ μανθάνοντα πιστεύειν, A learner should in some measure be credulous; otherwise, as he will often fail in his judgment, so he will make little progress in learning; for if he will admit nothing on his master's word, if he will question all things, if he will continually be doubting and disputing, or contradicting and opposing his teacher, how can instruction proceed? He that presently will be his own master is a bad scholar, and will be a worse master: he that will fly before he is fledged, no wonder if he tumble down.

There are divers obvious and very considerable cases in which persons most contemptuous of authority, and refractory toward their guides, are constrained to rely upon the judgment of others, and are contented to do it, their conscience shewing them unable to judge for themselves: in admitting the literal sense of scripture, according to translations; in the interpretation of difficult places, depending upon the skill of languages, grammer, and criticism, upon the knowledge of human arts and sciences, upon histories and ancient customs: in such cases, all illiterate persons (however otherwise diffident and disregardful of authority) are forced to see with the eyes of other men, to submit their judgment to the skill and fidelity of their learned guides, taking the very principles and foundations of their religion upon trust: and why, then, consonantly may they not do it in other cases; especially in the resolution of difficult, sublime, obscure, and subtile points, the comprehension whereof transcendeth their capacity?

* Regi debet, dum incipit se posse regere.—*Sen. Ep.* 94.

SERMON LIX.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.—*Obey them that have the rule over you.*

BUT further,—The more to engage and incline us to the performing this part of our duty (the regarding, prizing, confiding in the judgment of our guides), we may consider the great advantages, both natural and supernatural, which they have to qualify them in order to such purposes.

1. They may reasonably be presumed more intelligent and skilful in divine matters than others; for as they have the same natural capacities and endowments with others (or rather commonly somewhat better than others, as being designed and selected to this sort of employment), so their natural abilities are by all possible means improved: it is their trade and faculty, unto which their education is directed; in acquiring ability toward which they spend their time, their care, their pains; in which they are continually versed and exercised (*having*, as the apostle speaketh, *by reason of use, their senses exercised to discern both good and evil;*[a]) for which also they employ their supplications and devotions to God.

Many special advantages they hence procure, needful or very conducible to a more perfect knowledge of such matters, and to security from errors; such as are conversing with studies, which enlarge a man's mind, and improve his judgment; a skill of disquisition about things; of sifting and canvassing points coming under debate; of weighing the force of arguments, and distinguishing the colours of things; the knowledge of the languages in which the divine oracles are expressed; of sciences, of histories, of

[a] Heb. v. 14.

practices serving to the discovery and illustration of the truth; exercise in meditation, reading, writing, speaking, disputing, and conference, whereby the mind is greatly enlightened, and the reason strengthened; acquaintance with variety of learned authors, who with great diligence have expounded the holy scriptures, and with most accuracy discussed points of doctrine; especially with ancient writers, who, living near the apostolical times, and being immediately (or within few degrees mediately) their disciples, may justly be supposed most helpful toward informing us what was their genuine doctrine, what the true sense of their writings: by such means, as in other faculties, so in this of theology, a competent skill may be obtained; there is no other ordinary or probable way; and no extraordinary way can be trusted, now that men appear not to grow learned or wise by special inspiration or miracle; after that all pretences to such by-ways have been detected of imposture, and do smell too rank of hypocrisy.

Since, then, our guides are so advantageously qualified to direct us, it is in matters difficult and doubtful (the which require good measure of skill and judgment to determine about them) most reasonable that we should rely upon their authority, preferring it in such cases to our private discretion; taking it for more probable that they should comprehend the truth than we (unassisted by them, and judging merely by our own glimmering light) can do; deeming it good odds on the side of their doctrine against our opinion or conjecture.

They have also another peculiar advantage toward judging sincerely of things, by their greater retirement from the world, and disengagement from secular interests; the which ordinarily do deprave the understandings and pervert the judgments of men, disposing them to accommodate their conceits to the maxims of worldly policy, or to the vulgar apprehensions of men, many of which are false and base:[b] by such abstraction of mind from worldly affairs, together with fastening their meditation on the best things (which their calling necessarily doth put them upon) more than is usual to other men, they commonly get principles and habits of simplicity and integrity, which qualify men both to discern truth better, and more faithfully to declare it.

Seeing, then, in every faculty the advice of the skilful is to be regarded, and is usually relied upon; and in other affairs of greatest importance we scruple not to proceed so; seeing we commit our life and health (which are most precious to us) to the physician, observing his prescriptions commonly without any reason, sometimes against our own sense; we intrust our estate, which is so dear, with the lawyer, not contesting his advice; we put our goods and safety into the hands of a pilot, sleeping securely whilst he steereth us as he thinketh fit; seeing in many such occasions of common life we advisedly do renounce or waive our own opinions, absolutely yielding to the direction of others, taking their authority for a better argument or ground of action than any which our conceit or a bare consideration of the matter can suggest to us; admitting this maxim for good, that it is a more advisable and safe course, in matters of consequence, to follow the judgment of wiser men than to adhere to our own apprehensions:* seeing it is not wisdom (as every man thinks) in a doubtful case to act upon disadvantage, or to venture upon odds against himself, and it is plainly doing thus to act upon our own opinion against the judgment of those who are more improved in the way, or better studied in the point than ourselves; seeing in other cases these are the common approved apprehensions and practices; and seeing in this case there is plainly the same reason, for that there are difficulties and intricacies in this no less than in other faculties, which need good skill to resolve them; for that in these matters we may easily slip, and by error may incur huge danger and damage: why then should we not here take the same course, following (when no other clearer light or prevalent reason occurreth) the conduct and advice of our

[b] 2 Tim. ii. 4.

* Ὃν ἂν ἡγήσωνται περὶ τὰ συμφέροντα ἑαυτοῖς φρονιμώτερον ἑαυτῶν εἶναι, τούτῳ ἄνθρωποι ὑπερηδέως πείθονται.—Xen. Pæd. 1.

Ἐν μὲν τῷ πλεῖν πείθεσθαι δεῖ τῷ κυβερνήτῃ, ἐν δὲ τῷ ζῆν τῷ λογίζεσθαι δυναμένῳ βέλτιον.—Aristonymus apud Stob. tom. ii. tit. 3.

more skilful guides? especially considering, that, beside ordinary, natural, and acquired advantages, they have other supernatural, both obligations to the well discharging this duty, and assistances toward it: For,

2. We may consider, that they are by God appointed and empowered to instruct and guide us: it is their special office, not assumed by themselves, or constituted by human prudence, but ordained and settled by divine wisdom for our edification in knowledge, and direction in practice:* they are God's messengers, purposely sent by him, selected and *separated* by his instinct *for this work:* they are by him *given for the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying the body of Christ;*[c] it is by God's warrant, and in his name, that they spake; which giveth especial weight to their words, and no mean ground of assurance to us in relying upon them: for who is more likely to know God's mind and will, who may be presumed more faithful in declaring them, than God's own officers and agents? those whose great duty, whose main concernment it is to speak, not their own sense, but the word of God? They are God's mouth, by whom alone ordinarily he expresseth his mind and pleasure; by whom *he intreateth us to be reconciled*[d] in heart and practice to him: what they say, therefore, is to be received as God's word, except plain reason upon due examination do forbid.

If they by office are teachers, or masters in doctrine, then we answerably must in obligation be disciples, which implies admitting their doctrine and proficiency in knowledge thereby: if they are appointed shepherds, then must we be their sheep, to be led and fed by them; if they are God's messengers, we must yield some credence, and embrace the message uttered by them; so the prophet telleth us: *The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts:*[e] so the Law of old enjoined: *According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left:*[f] so our Lord also, in regard to the Scribes and Pharisees, saith, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's chair: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do;*[g] upon account of their office, whatever they direct to (not repugnant to the divine law) was to be observed by the people;[h] and surely in doubtful cases, when upon competent inquiry no clear light offereth itself, it cannot be very dangerous to follow their guidance whom God hath appointed and authorized to lead us: if we err doing so, we err wisely in the way of our duty, and so no great blame will attend our error.

3. We may consider that our guides, as such, have special assistance from God, to every vocation God's aid is congruously afforded; but to this (the principal of all others, the most important, most nearly related to God, and most peculiarly tending to his service) it is in a special manner most assuredly and plentifully imparted.

They are *stewards of God's various grace;*[i] and they who dispense grace to others cannot want it themselves; they are *co-operators with God,*[j] and God consequently doth co-operate with them; it is God who doth ἱκανοῦν, *render them sufficient to be ministers of the New Testament;* and they *minister of the ability which God supplieth;* every spiritual labourer is obliged to say with St. Paul, *By the grace of God I am what I am—I have laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.*[k]

God's having *given them,*[l] as St. Paul saith, to the church, doth imply that God hath endowed them with special ability, and furthereth them (in their conscionable discharge of their ministry) with aid requisite to the designs of *perfecting the saints, and edifying the body*[m] in knowledge, in virtue, in piety.

* Jer. iii. 15,—I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.—*Cypr. Ep.* 55.

[c] Rom. x. 15; Acts xiii. 2; Eph. iv. 11, 12; 1 Cor xii. 28; 1 Tim. i. 11, 12; ii. 7; Tit. i. 3; 1 Thess. ii. 4. [d] 2 Cor. v. 20.

[e] Mal. ii. 7. [f] Deut. xvii. 11.

[g] Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. [h] (Ezek. xxxiv. 16.)

[i] 1 Pet. iv. 10. [j] 1 Cor. iii. 9.

[k] 2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 10.

[l] Eph. iv. 11, 12. [m] 1 Cor. xii. 28.

As the Holy Ghost doth constitute them in their charge (according to that of St. Paul in the Acts, *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*,[n]) so questionless he doth enable and assist them in administering their function. There is *a gift* (of spiritual ability and divine succour) imparted by their consecration to this office, with *the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*, joined with humble supplications for them, and solemn benedictions in God's name upon them.[o] The divine Spirit, which *distributeth, as he seeth good, unto every member of the church* needful supplies of grace, doth *bestow* on them in competent measure *the word of wisdom* and *the word of knowledge* requisite for their employment.[p]

God of old did in extraordinary ways visibly communicate his Spirit unto his prophets and agents; the same he did liberally pour out upon the apostles, and first planters of the gospel; the same questionless he hath not withdrawn from those who under the evangelical dispenation (which is peculiarly the *ministration of the Spirit*,[q] unto which the aid of God's Spirit is most proper and most needful) do still by a settled ministry supply the room of those extraordinary ministers: but imparteth it to them in a way, although more ordinary and occult, yet no less real and effectual, according to proportions answerable to the exigencies of need and occasion; and by the influence hereof upon the pastors of his church it is, that our Lord accomplisheth his promise to be *with it until the end of the world*.[r]

Clavis scientiæ, the key of knowledge[s] spiritual, is one of those keys which he hath given to them, whereby they are enabled to open the kingdom of heaven.

Great reason, therefore, we have to place an especial confidence in their direction; for whom can we more safely follow than those whom (upon such grounds of divine declarations and promises) we may hope that God doth guide; so that consequently in following them we do in effect follow God himself? *He that heareth you heareth me*, might be said, not only because of their relation unto Christ, but because their word proceedeth from his inspiration, being no other than his mind conveyed through their mouth.

4. We may also, for our encouragement to confide in our guides, consider that they are themselves deeply concerned in our being rightly guided; their present comfort, their salvation hereafter, depending upon the faithful and careful discharge of their duty herein: they must render an account for it; so that if by their wilful or negligent miscarriage we do fall into dangerous error or sin, they do thence not only forfeit rich and glorious rewards (assigned to those *who turn many unto righteousness*), but incur woful punishment; this doth assure their integrity, and render our confidence in them very reasonable: for as we may safely trust a pilot who hath no less interest than ourselves in the safe conveyance of the vessel to port; so may we reasonably confide in their advice whose salvation is adventured with ours in the same bottom, or rather is wrapped up and carried in ours: it is not probable they will (at least designedly) misguide us, to their own extreme damage, to their utter ruin: *if they do not warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, God hath said that he will require his blood at their hands*;[t] and is it likely they should wittingly run such a hazard, that they should purposely cast away the souls for which they are so certainly accountable? it is our apostle's enforcement of the precept in our text, *Obey them that guide you; for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account*: which argumentation is not only grounded upon the obligations of ingenuity and gratitude, but also upon considerations of discretion and interests; we should obey our guides in equity and honesty; we may do it advisedly, because they, in regard to their own accounts at the final judgment, are obliged to be careful for the good of our souls.

Upon these considerations, it is plainly reasonable to follow our guides in all matters wherein we have no other very

[n] Acts xx. 28.
[o] 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.
[p] 1 Cor. xii. 7, &c. Eph. iv. 16; Rom. xii. 5, 6.
[q] 2 Cor. iii. 8.
[r] Matt. xxviii. 20.
[s] Luke xi. 52.
[t] Ezek. iii. 18; xxxiii. 2, 8.

clear and certain light of reason or revelation to conduct us: the doing so is indeed (which is further observable) not only wise in itself, but safe in way of prevention, that we be not seduced by other treacherous guides; it will not only secure us from our own weak judgments, but from the frauds of those *who lie in wait to deceive*.[u] The simpler sort of men will in effect be always led, not by their own judgment, but by the authority of others; and if they be not fairly guided by those whom God hath constituted and assigned to that end, they will be led by the nose by those who are concerned to seduce them: so reason dictateth that it must be, so experience sheweth it ever to have been; that the people, whenever they have deserted their true guides, have soon been hurried by impostors into most dangerous errors and extravagant follies; being *carried about with divers and strange doctrines;* being *like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine*.[v]

It is therefore a great advantage to us, and a great mercy of God, that there are (by God's care) provided for us such helps upon which we may commonly for our guidance in the way to happiness more safely rely, than upon our own judgments, liable to mistake, and than upon the counsel of others, who may be interested to abuse us; very foolish and very ingrateful we are, if we do not highly prize, if we do not willingly embrace this advantage.

I further add, that as wisdom may induce, so modesty and humility should dispose us to follow the direction of our guides: *Ye younger* (saith St. Peter) *submit yourselves unto the elder*,[w] (that is, ye inferiors to your superiors, ye that are the flock to your pastors), *and*, subjoineth he immediately, *be clothed with humility;* signifying, that it is a point of humility to yield that submission: every modest and humble person is apt to distrust his own, and to submit to better judgment; and, *Not to lean to our understanding, not to be wise in our own eyes, not to seem to know any thing*, not *to seem any body to oneself, in humility to prefer others before ourselves*,[x] are divine injunctions, chiefly applicable to this case, in reference to our spiritual guides; for if it be pride or culpable immodesty to presume ourselves wiser than any man, what is it then to prefer ourselves in that respect before our teachers; as indeed we do, when without evident reason we disregard, or dissent from their opinion.

It is, then, a duty very reasonable, and a very commendable practice, to rely upon the guidance of our pastors in such cases, wherein surer direction faileth, and we cannot otherwise fully satisfy ourselves.

Neither in doing so (against some appearances of reason, or with some violence to our private conceits) do we act against our conscience, but rather truly according to it; for conscience (as the word in this case is used) is nothing else but an opinion in practical matters grounded upon the best reason we can discern: if therefore in any case the authority of our guides be a reason outweighing all other reasons apparent, he that in such a case, notwithstanding other arguments less forcible, doth conform his judgment and practice thereto, therein exactly followeth conscience; yea, in doing otherwise, he would thwart and violate his his own conscience, and be self-condemned, adhering to a less probable reason in opposition to one more probable.

I do not hereby mean to assert that we are obliged indifferently (with an implicit faith, or blind obedience) to believe all that our teachers say, or to practise all they bid us: for they are men, and therefore subject to error and sin; they may neglect or abuse the advantages they have of knowing better than others; they may sometimes, by infirmity, by negligence, by pravity, fail in performing faithfully their duty toward us; they may be swayed by temper, be led by passion, be corrupted by ambition or avarice, so as thence to embrace and vent bad doctrines: we do see our pastors often dissenting and clashing among themselves, sometimes with themselves, so as to change and retract their own opinions.*

[u] Eph. iv. 14.
[v] Heb. xiii. 9; Eph. iv. 14.
[w] 1 Pet. v. 5.

* Isa. iii. 12,—O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

[x] Prov. iii. 5, 7; Rom. xii. 3, 10; Gal. vi. 3; Phil. ii. 3; 1 Cor. viii. 2; 1 Tim. vi. 4.

We find the prophets of old complaining of priests, of pastors, of elders and prophets, who *handled the law, yet were ignorant of God;* who *erred in vision, and stumbled in judgment;* who *were profane, brutish, light, and treacherous persons;* who *polluted the sanctuary, and did violence to the law, and profaned holy things;* who *handled the law, yet knew not God;* from *whom the law and counsel did perish; who taught for hire, and divined for money; who themselves departed out of the way, and caused many to stumble, and corrupted the covenant of Levi; who destroyed and scattered the sheep of God's pasture.*[y]

There were in our Saviour's time guides, *of the ferment of whose doctrine* good people were *bid to beware;* who *transgressed and defeated the commandment of God by their traditions:* who *did take away the key of knowledge, so that they would not enter themselves into the kingdom of heaven, nor would suffer others to enter:*[z] *blind guides,*[a] who both themselves did fall, and drew others into the ditch of noxious error and wicked practice: the followers of which guides did *in vain worship God, observing for doctrine the precepts of men.*[b]

There have not since the primitive times of the gospel wanted those who (indulging to ambition, avarice, curiosity, faction, and other bad affections) have depraved and abased religion with noxious errors and idle superstitions; such as St. Bernard describeth, &c.[c]

We are, in matters of such infinite concernment to our eternal welfare, in wisdom and duty obliged not wholly without further heed or care to trust the diligence and integrity of others, but to consider and look about us, using our own reason, judgment, and discretion, so far as we are capable; we cannot in such a case be blamed for too much circumspection and caution.

We are not wholly blind, not void of reason, not destitute of fit helps; in many cases we have competent ability to judge, and means sufficient to attain knowledge: we are therefore concerned to use our eyes, to employ our reason, to embrace and improve the advantages vouchsafed us.

We are accountable personally for all our actions, as agreeable or cross to reason; if we are mistaken by our own default, or misled by the ill guidance of others, we shall however deeply suffer for it, and *die in our iniquity:*[d] the ignorance or error of our guides will not wholly excuse us from guilt, or exempt us from punishment; it is fit, therefore, that we should be allowed, as to the sum of the matter, to judge and choose for ourselves: for if our salvation were wholly placed in the hands of others, so that we could not but in case of their error or default miscarry, our ruin would be inevitable, and consequently not just: we should perish without blame, if we were bound, as a blind and brutish herd, to follow others.

We, in order to our practice (which must be regulated by faith and knowledge), and toward preparing ourselves for our grand account, are obliged to get a knowledge and persuasion concerning our duty; *to prove* (or search and examine) *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God:*[e] for ignorance, if anywise by our endeavour vincible, will not secure us: *He that* (saith our Lord and Judge) *knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes*[f] (few; not in themselves, but comparatively to those which shall be inflicted on them who transgress against knowledge and conscience.)

We are bound to study truth, to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of it, to be firmly persuaded of it in a rational way; so that we be not easily shaken, or seduced from it.

The apostles do charge it upon us as our duty and concernment, that we *abound in faith and knowledge;* that we *be rooted and built up in Christ, and established in the faith, so as to be steadfast, and unmoveable,* not to *be soon shaken in mind, or troubled; to grow up and in-*

[y] (Jer. ii. 8;) Isa. xxviii. 7; Jer. x. 21; xii. 10; xxiii. 11; (xviii. 18; v. 31; vi. 13;) Zeph. iii. 4; Ezek. xxii 26; Mal. i. 6; Ezek. vii. 26; Mic. iii. 11; Mal. ii. 8, 9; Jer. xxiii. 11; xii. 10.

[z] Matt. xvi. 6, 12; Luke xii. 1; Matt. xv. 2, 6; Luke xi. 52.

[a] Matt. xv. 14. [b] Matt. xv. 9.

[c] *Vide* Apol. Eccl. Ang.

[d] Ezek. iii. 18.

[e] Rom. xii. 2; Eph. v. 10.

[f] Luke xii. 48.

crease in all divine knowledge; that *the word of God should dwell richly in us in all wisdom;* that we should be *filled with all knowledge, so as to be able to teach and admonish one another;* that *our love should abound more and more in knowledge, and all judgment, that we may approve things excellent*[g] (or scan things different) that we be *enriched in all the word* (that is, in all the doctrine of the gospel), *and in all knowledge;* that *we be filled in the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*[h] that we should not be *unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is;* that we should *be perfect and complete in all the will of God* (that is, first in the knowledge of it, then in compliance with it;) that *in understanding we should not be children, but perfect men.*[i]

We are likewise by them commanded to *take heed of false prophets;* to *try the spirits whether they are of God;* to *see that no man deceive us;* to *look that no man spoil us by vain deceit;* to *try all things, and hold fast that which is good;* which precepts imply, that we should be furnished with a good faculty of judgment, and competent knowledge in the principal matters of Christian doctrine, concerning both the mysteries of faith and the rules of practice. Our Lord himself and his apostles did not upon other terms than of rational consideration and discussion exact credit and obedience to their words; they did not insist barely upon their own authority, but exhorted their disciples to examine strictly, and judge faithfully concerning the truth and reasonableness of their doctrine: *Search the scriptures,* for *they testify of me; If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works:*[k] so our Lord appealed to their reason, proceeding upon grounds of scripture and common sense: and, *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say;*[l] so St. Paul addressed his discourse to his disciples; otherwise we should be uncapable to observe them.

We are also bound to defer the principal regard to God's wisdom and will, so as, without reservation or exception, to embrace whatever he doth say, to obey what he positively doth command, whatever authority doth contradict his word, or cross his command: in such cases we may remonstrate with the apostles, *If it be just before God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye;* and, *We ought to obey God rather than men:* we may denounce with St. Paul, *If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.*[m]

We are obliged always to act *with faith* (that is, with a persuasion concerning the lawfulness of what we do;) for *whatever is not of faith is sin:*[n] we should never condemn ourselves in what we try or embrace.

These things considered, we may, and it much behoveth us, reserving due respect to our guides, with humility and modesty to weigh and scan their dictates and their orders; lest by them unawares we be drawn into error or sin; like the ingenuous Bereans, who did ἀνακρίνειν τὰς γραφὰς, *search and examine the scriptures, if those things were so.*[o] Our guides are but the *helpers,*[p] they are not lords of our faith; the apostles themselves were not.

We may, and are bound, if they tell us things evidently repugnant to God's word, or to sound reason and common sense, to dissent from them; if they impose on us things evidently contrary to God's law, to forbear compliance with them; we may in such cases appeal *ad legem et testimonium;* we must not admit a *non obstante* to God's law.*

If other arguments, weighed in the balance of honest and impartial reason, with cautious and industrious consideration, do overpoise the authority of our guides; let us in God's name adhere to them, and follow our own judgments; it would be a violation of our conscience,

[g] 2 Cor. viii. 7; Col. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 58; 2 Thess. ii. 2; Col. i. 10; 2 Pet. iii. 18; ii. 2; Eph. iv. 15; Col. iii. 16; Rom. xv. 14; Heb. v. 12; Phil. i. 9, 10.

[h] 1 Cor. i. 5; Col. i. 9.

[i] Eph. v. 17; Col. iv. 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 20; Heb. v. 12.

[k] Matt. vii. 15; 1 John iv. 1; Matt. xxiv. 4; Eph. v. 6; Col. ii. 8, 18; 1 Thess. v. 21.

[l] John v. 39; x. 37, 38; xv. 22, 24; xii. 48.

* Isa. viii. 20,—Plebs timens Dominum separare se debet a peccatore præposito.—*Cypr.*

[m] 1 Cor. x. 15.

[n] Acts iv. 19; v. 29; Gal. i. 8.

[o] Rom. xiv. 22, 23. [p] Acts xvii. 11.

[p] 2 Cor. i. 24.

a prevarication toward our own souls, and a rebellion against God, to do otherwise: when against our own mind, so carefully informed, we follow the dictates of others, we like fools rashly adventure and prostitute our souls.

This proceeding is nowise inconsistent with what we delivered before; for this due wariness in examining, this reservation in assenting, this exception in practice, in some cases, wherein the matter hath evidence, and we a faculty to judge, doth nowise hinder but that we should defer much regard to the judgment of our guides; that we should, in those cases wherein no light discovereth itself outshining their authority, rely upon it; that where our eyes will not serve clearly to direct us, we should use theirs; where our reason faileth to satisfy us, we should acquiesce in theirs; that we should regard their judgments so far, that no petty scruple emerging, no faint semblance of reason, should prevail upon us to dissent from their doctrine, to reject their advice, to disobey their injunctions.

In fine, let us remember, that the mouth of truth, which bids us to *beware of the* bad *doctrine* of those who *sat in Moses's chair*, did also charge us *to observe all they taught and enjoined*;[q] that is, all not certainly repugnant to the divine law. In effect, if we discost from the advices of our sober teachers, appointed for us by God, we shall in the end have occasion to bewail with him in the Proverbs: *How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!*[r]

To these things I shall only add one rule, which we may well suppose comprised in the precept we treat upon; which is, that at least we forbear openly to dissent from our guides, or to contradict their doctrine; except only, if it be not so false (which never, or rarely, can happen among us) as to subvert the foundations of faith, or practice of holiness. If we cannot be internally convinced by their discourses, if their authority cannot sway with us against the prevalence of other reasons, yet may we spare outwardly to oppose them, or to slight their judgment; for doing thus doth tend, as to the disgrace of their persons, so to the disparagement of their office, to an obstructing the efficacy of their ministry, to the infringement of order and peace in the church: for when the inconsiderate people shall see their teachers distrusted and disrespected; when they perceive their doctrine may be challenged and opposed by plausible discourses; then will they hardly trust them, or comply with them in matters most certain and necessary; than which disposition in the people there cannot happen any thing more prejudicial or baneful to the church.

But let thus much serve for the obedience due to the doctrine of our guides; let us consider that which we owe to them in reference to their conversation and practice.

The following their practice may well be referred to this precept; for that their practice is a kind of living doctrine, a visible law, or rule of action; and because indeed the notion of a guide primarily doth imply example; that he which is guided should respect the guide as a precedent, being concerned to walk after his footsteps.

Most of the reasons, which urge deference to their judgment in teaching, do in proportion infer obligation to follow their example (which indeed is the most easy and clear way of instruction to vulgar capacity; carrying with it also most efficacious encouragement and excitement to practice;) they are obliged, and it is expected from them, to live with especial regularity, circumspection, and strictness of conversation; they are by God's grace especially disposed and enabled to do so; and many common advantages they have of doing so (a more perfect knowledge of things, firmness of principles, and clearness of notions; a deeper tincture, and more savoury relish of truth, attained by continual meditation thereon; consequently a purity of mind and affection, a retirement from the world and its temptation, freedom from distraction of worldly care and the encumbrances of business, with the like.)

They are often charged to be exemplary in conversation, as we before shewed, and that involveth a correspondent obligation to follow them. They must, like

[q] Matt. xv. 14; xxiii. 3.
[r] Prov. v. 12, 13.

St. John Baptist, *be burning and shining lights; stars in God's right hand; lights of the world; whose light should shine before men, that men may see their good works;*[3] and by their light direct their steps.

They are proposed as copies, which signifies that we must in our practice transcribe them.

We are often directly commanded to imitate them; ὧν μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν, *whose faith imitate ye* (that is, their faithful perseverance in the doctrine and practice of Christianity), saith the apostle in this chapter.

Their conversation is safely imitable in all cases wherein no better rule appeareth, and when it doth not appear discordant from God's law and the dictates of sound reason; for supposing that discordance, we cease to be obliged to follow them; as when our Lord prescribeth in respect to the Pharises: *Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works; for they say and do not.*[4]

It is indeed easier for them to speak well than to do well; their doctrine, therefore, is more commonly a sure guide than their practice; yet when there wanteth a clearer guidance of doctrine, their practice may pass for instructive, and a probable argument or warrant of action.

SERMON LX.

OF SELF-LOVE IN GENERAL.

2 Tim. iii. 2. — *For men shall be lovers of themselves.*

St. Paul, in this place, out of a prophetical spirit instructing or warning his disciple Timothy concerning *difficult times*,* or the calamitous state of things which should ensue, induced upon the world, as it useth to happen, by a general prevalency of vicious dispositions and practices among men, doth thence take occasion, by a specification of their vices, to characterize the persons who should concur to produce that hard state.

Among those vices he placeth self-love in the van, as the capital and leading vice; intimating thereby, that it is of all in its nature most heinous, or in its influence most noxious.*

This indeed is of all vices the most common, so deeply radicated in our nature, and so generally overspreading the world, that no man thoroughly is exempted from it, most men are greatly tainted with it, some are wholly possessed and acted by it: this is the root from which all other vices do grow, and without which hardly any sin could subsist; the chief vices especially have an obvious and evident dependance thereon.

All impiety doth involve a loving ourselves in undue manner and measure; so that we set ourselves in our esteem and affection before God; we prefer our own conceits to his judgment and advice; we raise our pleasure above his will and authority; we bandy forces with him, and are like the profane Belshazzar, of whom it is said, *Thou hast lifted up thyself against* (or above) *the Lord of heaven.*[5]

From hence particularly, by a manifest extraction, are derived those chief and common vices, pride, ambition, envy, avarice, intemperance, injustice, uncharitableness, peevishness, stubbornness, discontent, and impatience. For

We overvalue ourselves, our qualities and endowments, our powers and abilities, our fortunes and external advantages; hence are we so proud, that is, so lofty in our conceits, and fastuous in our demeanour.

We would be the only men, or most considerable in the world; hence are we ambitious, hence continually with unsatiable greediness we do affect and strive to procure increase of reputation, of power, of dignity.

We would engross to ourselves all sorts of good things in highest degree; hence enviously we become jealous of the worth and virtue, we grudge and repine at the prosperity of others; as if they defalked somewhat from our excellency, or did eclipse the brightness of our fortune.

We desire to be not only full in our enjoyment, but free and absolute in our do-

* Καιροὶ χαλεποὶ ἐνστήσονται.
[3] John v. 35; Rev. xvi. 20; Matt. v. 14, 16.
[4] Matt. xxiii. 3.

* Hæc omnia mala ab eo velut fonte manantia, quod primum posuit, seipsos amantes.—*August. in Joh. Tract.* 123.
[5] Dan. v. 23.

minion of things; not only secure from needing the succour of other men, but independent in regard to God's providence; hence are we so covetous of wealth, hence we so eagerly scrape it, and so carefully hoard it up.

We can refuse our dear selves no satisfaction, although unreasonable or hurtful; therefore we so readily gratify sensual appetites in unlawful or excessive enjoyments of pleasure.

Being blinded or transported with fond dotage on ourselves, we cannot discern or will not regard what is due to others; hence are we apt upon occasion to do them wrong.

Love to ourselves doth in such manner suck in and swallow our spirits, doth so pinch in and contract our hearts, doth according to its computation so confine and abridge our interests, that we cannot in our affection or in real expression of kindness tend outwards; that we can afford little good-will, or impart little good to others.

Deeming ourselves extremely wise and worthy of regard, we cannot endure to be contradicted in our opinion, or crossed in our humour; hence upon any such occasion our choler riseth, and easily we break forth into violent heats of passion.

From the like causes it is, that we cannot willingly stoop to due obeisance of our superiors, in reverence to their persons, and observance of their laws; that we cannot contentedly acquiesce in the station or portion assigned us by Providence; that we cannot patiently support our condition, or accept the events befalling us.

In fine, if surveying all the several kinds of naughty dispositions in our souls, and of miscarriages in our lives, we do scan their particular nature, and search into their original causes; we shall find inordinate self-love to be a main ingredient and a common source of them all; so that a divine of great name had some reason to affirm, that original sin (or that innate distemper from which men generally become so very prone to evil and averse to good) doth consist in self-love, disposing us to all kinds of irregularity and excess:* St. Paul therefore might well set this in the front of all those sins which depraved the age he spake of; they having all such a dependance on it.

It is therefore very requisite that we should well understand this fault, that we may be the better able to curb and correct it; to which purpose I shall endeavour, by God's help, somewhat to declare its nature.

The word *self-love* is ambiguous; for all self-love is not culpable; there is a necessary and unavoidable, there is an innocent and allowable, there is a worthy and commendable self-love.

There is a self-love originally implanted by God himself in our nature, in order to the preservation and enjoyment of our being; the which is common to us with all creatures, and cannot anywise be extirpated; for *no man* (as St. Paul saith) *ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it*:[b] every man living, by a natural and necessary instinct, is prompted to guard his life, shunning all dangers threatening its destruction; to purvey for the support and convenience of it; to satisfy those natural appetites, which importunately crave relief, and without intolerable pain cannot be denied it; to repel or decline whatever is very grievous and offensive to nature:* the self-love that urgeth us to do these things is no more to be blamed than it can be shunned.

Reason further alloweth such a self-love, which moveth us to the pursuance of any thing apparently good, pleasant, or useful to us, the which doth not contain in it any essential turpitude or iniquity; doth not obstruct the attainment of some true or greater good; doth not produce some overbalancing mischief; doth not infer harm to the world, or wrong to other men.†

Reason dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober regard to our true good and welfare; to our best interest and solid content; to that, which (all things being rightly stated, consider-

* Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum originale, &c.—*Zuingl. apud Bell. de Amiss. Grat.* iv. 2.

* Panis ematur, olus, vini sextarius; adde
Queis humana sibi doleat natura negatis.
Hor. Serm. i. 1.

† Τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν δεῖ φίλαυτον εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὀνήσεται τὰ καλὰ πράττων, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ὠφελήσει· τὸν δὲ μοχθηρὸν οὐ δεῖ, βλάψει γὰρ καὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς πέλας, φαύλοις πάθεσιν ἑπόμενος.—Arist. Eth. ix. 8.

[b] Eph. v. 29.

ed, and computed) will in the final event prove most beneficial and satisfactory to us; a self-love working in prosecution of such things common sense cannot but allow and approve.*

God himself hath to these suggestions of nature, and dictates of reason, adjoined his own suffrage, having in various ways declared it to be his will and pleasure, that we should tender our real and final good. He, as the Author of nature, and Fountain of reason, may be supposed to ordain that unto which nature doth so potently incline, and which reason so clearly prescribeth. He plainly hath to every man committed himself in charge, so as to preserve his being from ruin, and to enjoy it with comfort.† He by making so rich a provision for the sustenance of our lives and satisfaction of our appetites, by framing our bodies to relish delight, and suiting so many accommodations in wondrous correspondence to our senses, hath sufficiently intimated it to be his pleasure, that we should in reasonable measure seek them and enjoy them; otherwise his care would have been vain, and his work useless; yea, he might seem to have laid an ill design to tempt and ensnare us: he certainly had no such intent; but as he made us out of goodness, as he made us capable of tasting comfort, as he hath furnished us with means of attaining it, so he meaneth that we should partake thereof.

He also expressly hath commanded us to love all men, not excluding ourselves from the number; to love our neighbour, and therefore ourselves; who of all are nearest to ourselves; who occur as the first objects of humanity and charity; whose needs we most sensibly feel; whose good is in itself no less considerable than the single good of any other person; who must first look to our own good before we can be capable to love others, or do any good to our neighbour.

He therefore hath made the love of ourselves to be the rule and standard, the pattern, the argument, of our love to others; imposing on us those great commands of *loving our neighbours as ourselves*, and *doing as we would be done unto;* which imply not only a necessity, but an obligation of loving ourselves.

He doth enforce obedience to all his commands by promising rewards, yielding immense profit and transcendent pleasure to us, and by threatening punishments grievous to our sense;[c] which proceeding is grounded upon a supposition that we do and ought greatly to love ourselves, or to regard our own interest and pleasure.

He doth recommend wisdom or virtue to us, as most agreeable to self-love; most eligible, because it yieldeth great benefit to ourselves; because, as the Wise Man saith, *he that getteth it, doth love his own soul; he that keepeth it, shall find good.*[d]

Aristotle saith of a virtuous man, that he is the greatest *self-lover: Δόξειε δ' ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι μᾶλλον φίλαυτος· ἀπονέμει γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τὰ κάλλιστα, καὶ μάλιστα ἀγαθὰ, καὶ χαρίζεται ἑαυτοῦ τῷ κυριωτατῳ.*[e]

He dissuadeth from vice, as therefore detestable, because the embracing it doth imply hatred of ourselves, bringing mischief and damage to us; because, as the Wise Man doth express it, *He that sinneth, wrongeth his own soul: he that despiseth instruction, despiseth his own soul: he that committeth injury, hateth his own soul.*[f]

He commendeth his laws to our observance, by declaring them in their design and tendency chiefly to regard our good and advantage;[g] made apt to preserve the safety and quiet, to promote the wealth and prosperity of our lives; to bring ease and comfort to our minds, grace and ornament to our names, salvation and happiness to our souls.

In fine, God chargeth and encourageth us to affect and pursue the highest goods whereof we are capable; most ample riches, most sublime honours, most sweet pleasures, most complete felicity; *He* (saith St. Paul) *will render to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life;*[h] to seek such things is the highest instance, is the surest argument

* Πᾶς γὰρ νοῦς αἱρεῖται τὸ βέλτιστον ἑαυτῷ, ὁ δὲ ἐπιεικὴς πειθαρχεῖ τῷ νῷ.—Ibid.

† Quia tutela certissima ex proximo est, sibi quisque commissus est.—*Sen. Ep.* 121.

[c] Matt. xvi. 26.
[d] Prov. xix. 8, 16; xi. 17.
[e] Eth. ix. 8.
[f] Prov. viii. 36; xv. 32; xxix. 24.
[g] Deut. x. 12; Mic. vi. 8; Neh. ix. 13; Prov. iii. iv. &c.
[h] Rom. ii. 7.

of self-love that can be; he therefore who obligeth, who encourageth us thereto, doth plainly show his approbation of a self-love.

So it appeareth that all self-love is not culpable, but that some kind thereof is very commendable; how then shall we distinguish; how shall we *sever* (to use the prophet's language) *the precious from the vile*[1]?

To this we may answer in general, that all love of ourselves which is unreasonably grounded, or which is excessive in its degrees and limits; or which venteth itself in wrong instances; or which driveth our mind, will, and affections, toward bad objects; or which produceth effects noxious to ourselves or others, is culpable. If we esteem ourselves for things not true, or really for things indifferent or mean, for things nowise excellent or valuable; if we affect ourselves beyond compass, so as to postpone the love of God, or exclude the love of our neighbour; if out of regard to ourselves we do things base or mischievous; if thence we dote upon vain profits, embrace foul pleasures, incur sinful guilt, expose ourselves to grievous danger, trouble, remorse, and punishment; if thereby we are engaged to forsake our true interest, and forfeit our final happiness; then assuredly it is a foolish and vicious self-love; it is indeed not a proper, but a false and equivocal love, usurping that goodly name; it is a real hatred or enmity, disguised under the semblance of friendship; it more properly may be called cruelty, treachery, flattery, mockery, delusion, and abuse of ourselves.

But for a more distinct and clear resolution of the case, we may do well to consider the proper acts of love, which do constitute it, or inseparably do adhere thereto; such as those: a good esteem of the person which is the object of our love; an earnest good-will toward him, or desire of his good; a complacence in good, and dissatisfaction in evil arriving to him; a readiness to yield or procure good to him; a desire of union and enjoyment, that is, of intimate conversation and intercourse with him, a deference of regard to him, a compliance with his desires, and care to please him. Now if these acts toward ourselves are in their kind, in their grounds, in their measures, conformable to reason, piety, and justice, then is our self-love innocent or worthy: if they are not so, it is criminal and vicious.

If we do rightly esteem ourselves (both absolutely, and in comparison to others;) if we desire to ourselves what is fit and just; if we are pleased with true goods, and displeased at real evils incident to us; if we do in lawful ways endeavour to procure things truly convenient and beneficial to us; if we maintain a faithful and cheerful correspondence with ourselves; if we have a sober regard to ourselves, agreeable to our nature and state; if we comply with the dictates of our reason, and satisfy our desires conforming thereto; then do we love ourselves innocently, then are we true friends to ourselves.

But if we overvalue ourselves; if we do wish to ourselves things incommodious or hurtful; if we are delighted or dissatisfied in false shows of good or evil befalling us; if we strive to acquire for ourselves things bad or mischievous; if our converse with ourselves is naughty or vain; if we make indecent applications to ourselves; if we stoop to our fond humours, or soothe our unreasonable desires; then is our self-love spurious, then are we indeed enemies to ourselves.

Further, toward an exact discussion and trial of this case, we should do well, divesting ourselves of selfishness, to consider ourselves as other persons, or abstractedly as mere objects of those acts which love doth imply; for what rectitude or what obliquity there would be in them in regard to any object, the same would be in reference to ourselves. For instance,

If we should value any person justly according to his real worth, allowing a just rate to his virtue, to his parts, to his endowments, to his advantages of nature or fortune; not ascribing to him things which belong not to him, nor overprising those he hath, nor preferring him in any respect before those which are his superiors or equals therein; we shall herein do wisely and justly: but if (having our judgment anywise perverted) we do admire a person beyond his worth, and advance him above his rank; if we over-

[1] Jer. xv. 19.

look his apparent defects and blemishes, or take them for excellencies, and yield them applause; what is this but folly and dotage, tempered with iniquity? and if it be such in regard to another, it is no less such in respect to ourselves.

If to any person we should wish things suitable, commodious, and advantageous, by obtaining which he, without any wrong or prejudice to others, might be considerably benefitted, we shall herein act humanely, and like good friends; but if we desire things to him, which do not become or befit him, which will do him mischief, or which he cannot have without injury and damage to others, are we not herein notoriously unkind or unjust? The case is the same transferred to ourselves.

If we should observe any man, by occurrences happening to him, well improved in his condition, thriving in an honest way, prosperous in good undertakings, growing in worthy accomplishments of soul, to find satisfaction therein would be greatly laudable; and so it would be to condole, if we should see any man to fall into any grievous disaster or calamity; but should we behold a man (although in false appearance bettered, yet really) prejudiced and endamaged, as when one is enriched by cozenage or rapine, is advanced by flattery or sycophantry, is famed for base or vain exploits, is immersed into care and trouble, is exposed to danger and temptation, is fallen into the enchantments of pleasure), are we not, if we take pleasure therein, very silly, or very cruel? and if we should observe good physic administered to a sick neighbour, or that he is engaged in painful exercise for his health, should it not be absurd for us to be sorry thereat? For the same reasons we are blameable if we do rejoice when that we prosper in bad courses, or enjoy sinful pleasures, or fall into dangerous temptations; if we distaste the wholesome physic of adversity dispensed by Providence, or dislike the needful exercises of duty by God prescribed to us.

If we do yield our advice and aid to our neighbour, in furtherance of any design which is honest and beneficial to him, we then unquestionably do well; but if we do abet or encourage him in unjust or mischievous enterprises; if we render ourselves panders to his unlawful desires, factors for his unjust profits, complices of his wicked practices, advocates of his sins; is this true love, is this faithful friendship? No, surely; nor is it such toward ourselves, when we employ our faculties in contrivance or achievement of any unlawful designs, however satisfactory to our desires.

If we should indifferently (without regard to the laws of piety, justice, humanity, or decency) espouse the interests of any person, so that for the promoting his desiges, advancing his profit, gratifying his humour or pleasure, we should violate the commands of God, we should neglect the public good, we should work injury or mischief to our neighbour; would this dealing be allowable? Neither would it be so, if for our own sake, in regard to our private interest, we should thus behave ourselves.

2. If we do affect to hold free, sincere, cheerful, kind conversation with any person, for mutual instruction and comfort, this is sociable and friendly; but if we maintain frothy, foul, malicious, anywise pestilent discourse apt to corrupt, or to annoy him, this is loathsome: and so it is, if we keep such intercourse with ourselves, harbouring vain, impure, unjust, uncharitable thoughts in our minds.

If we should defer regard to any man, answerable to his worth, we should thereby practice according to the good rules of humanity: but should we so affect or fancy any man that we should care for no man else, should pay no due respect, or perform any office of kindness otherwhere; should take no man's word, or mind any man's opinion beside, nor care to converse with any other; would this be love, would it not be ridiculous fondness? It is no less, if in regard to ourselves we are so morose, surly, or neglectful.

If we should comply with any man's reasonable desire, this were fair and courteous; if we should confide in the probable assistance of any person, this were modest prudence: but if we should entirely conform our practice to the will or humour of another, against the dictates of our own reason, and to the harm of ourselves or others; would this be love? would it not rather be vile and pitiful slavery? If we should, without any ground,

yea against plain reason, rely upon the help or direction of another, would this be love? would it not rather be wild presumption? The same, therefore, it must be in us, if we in like manner are devoted to our own will, or confident in our own ability.

If we should commend any man for good qualities or good deeds, this is honest; if we should encourage him in good undertakings, this is charitable: but to applaud his defects, to bolster him in ill practice, this is flattery and treachery; and in so doing toward others, we are not friends to ourselves, but traitors and parasites.

By such reflections and comparisons we may, I think, competently understand the nature of that bastard self-love, which is so vicious in itself, and productive of so many vices: but more fully to display, and withal to dissuade us from this vice, I shall particularly insist upon the common sorts thereof, shewing the peculiar unreasonableness of each, and the mischiefs consequent from it. They are indeed usually combined and complicated in practice, and have much affinity both in their nature and fruit; but I shall, as well as I can, abstract them one from the other, and so treat on them distinctly. They are these: *self-conceit*, *self-confidence*, *self-complacence*, *self-will*, *self-interest*. These I shall handle in the following Discourses.

SERMON LXI.

OF SELF-CONCEIT.

2 Tim. iii. 2.—*For men shall be lovers of themselves*, &c.

I. The first and most radical kind of vicious self-love is *self-conceitedness;* that which St. Paul calleth τὸ ὑπερφρονεῖν, *to overween*, or *to think highly of one's self, beyond what he ought to think.* This doth consist in several acts or instances.

Sometimes we in our imagination assume to ourselves perfections not belonging to us, in kind or in degree; we take ourselves to be other men than we are; to be wise, to be good, to be happy, when we are not so; at least to be far wiser, better, and happier than we are. The pleasure naturally springing from a good opinion of ourselves doth often so blind our eyes and pervert our judgment, that we see in us what is not there, or see it magnified and transformed into another shape than its own: any appearance doth suffice to produce such mistakes, and, having once entertained them, we are unwilling to depose them; we cannot endure by severe reflection on ourselves to correct such pleasant errors; hence commonly we presume ourselves to be very considerable, very excellent, very extraordinary persons, when in truth we are very mean and worthless: so did St. Paul suppose when he said, *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself:* such was the case of that church in the Apocalypse; *Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable:*[b] they were like men in a dream, or in a phrenzy, who take themselves for great and wealthy persons, when indeed they are in a sorry and beggarly condition: into the like extravagancies of mistake we are all likely to fall, if we do not very carefully and impartially examine and study ourselves.

Again; sometimes we make vain judgments upon the things we do possess, prizing them much beyond their true worth and merit; consequently overvaluing ourselves for them; the most trivial and pitiful things (things which in themselves have no worth, but are mere tools, and commonly serve bad purposes; things which do not render our souls anywise better, which do not breed any real content, which do not conduce to our welfare and happiness) we value at a monstrous rate, as if they were the most excellent and admirable things in the world. Have we wit? how witless are we in prizing it, or ourselves for it; although we employ it to no good end, not serving God, not benefiting men, not furthering our own good, or anywise bettering our condition with it; although we no otherwise use it, than vainly to please ourselves or others, that is, to act the part of fools or buffoons. Have we learning or knowledge? then are we rare persons; not considering that many a bad, many a wretched person, hath had much more

[a] Gal. vi. 3. [b] Rev. iii. 17.

than we, who hath used it to the abuse of others, to the torment of himself; that hell may be full of learned scribes and subtile disputers, of eloquent orators and profound philosophers; who *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*:* not considering also how very defective our knowledge is, how mixed with error and darkness; how useless and vain, yea how pernicious it is, if not sanctified by God's grace, and managed to his service. Have we riches? then are we brave men, as fine and glorious in our conceit as in our outward attire; although the veriest fools, the basest and most miserable of men, that go on the ground, do exceed us therein; although (as Aristotle saith) *Most either not use it, or abuse it*;† although our wealth affordeth us no real benefit or comfort, but exposeth us to numberless snares, temptations, and mischiefs; although it hath no stability, but easily may be taken from us. Have we reputation? how doth that make us highly to repute ourselves in a slavish imitation of others! yet nothing is less substantial, nothing is less felt, nothing is so easily lost, nothing is more brittle and slippery than it; a bubble is not sooner broken, or a wave sunk, than is the opinion of men altered concerning us. Have we power? what doth more raise our minds! yet what is that commonly but a dangerous instrument of mischief to others, and of ruin to ourselves; at least an engagement to care and trouble? What but that did render Caligula, Nero, and Domitian so hurtful to others, so unhappy to themselves? what but that hath filled the world with disasters, and turned all history into tragedy? Have we prosperous success in our affairs? then we boast and triumph in our hearts; not remembering what the Wise Man saith, *The prosperity of fools destroyeth them*; and that experience sheweth, prosperity doth usually either find or make us fools;‡ that the wisest men (as Solomon) the best men (as Hezekiah) have been befooled by it:[d] thus are we apt to overvalue our things, and ourselves for them.

There is no way indeed wherein we do not thus impose upon ourselves, either assuming false, or misrating true advantages; the general ill consequences of which misdemeanour are, that our minds are stuffed with dreams and fantastic imaginations, instead of wise and sober thoughts; that we misbehave ourselves toward ourselves, treating ourselves like other men than we are, with unseemly regard; that we expect other men should have like opinions, and yield answerable deferences to us; and are, if we find it otherwise, grievously offended; that we are apt to despise or disregard others, demeaning ourselves insolently and fastuously toward them; that we are apt to seek and undertake things, which we cannot attain or achieve; that we neglect the succours needful to help or comfort us, and the like: which will appear more plainly by considering the several objects or matters in which self-conceit is exercised; they are especially three: *intellectual endowments; moral qualities; advantages of body, fortune, and outward state.*

1. We are apt to conceit highly of ourselves upon presumption of our *intellectual endowments* or capacities, whether *natural* (as *wit, fancy, memory, judgment*) or *acquired* (as *learning, skill, experience*), especially of that which is called *wisdom*,* which in a manner comprehendeth the rest, and manageth them; whereby we rightly discern what is true, and what is fit to be done in any case proposed: this we are prone in great measure to arrogate, and much to pride ourselves therein. The world is as full as it can hold of wise men, or of those who take themselves to be such; not only absolutely, but comparatively, in derogation and preference to all others: may it not be said to us as Job did to his friends, *No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you!*[e] Do we not fancy ourselves incomparably wise, so that all our imaginations are

* Rom. i. 21,—Ardua res hæc est, opibus non tradere mores.—*Mart.* xi. 6.

† Τῶν πολλῶν οἱ μὲν οὐ χρῶνται τῷ πλούτῳ διὰ μικρολογίαν, οἱ δὲ παραχρῶνται δι' ἀσωτίαν.—Arist. apud Plut. in Pelop.

‡ Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa Fortuna ——— *Juv. Sat.* 8.

• Prov. i. 32.

* 1 Cor. iii. 18,—Μωρὸς γενέσθω, ἵνα γένηται σοφός.—*Vide* Chris. in Phil. Or. 7.

[d] 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

• Job xii. 2.

deep and subtile, all our resolutions sound and safe, all our opinions irrefragably certain, all our sayings like so many oracles or indubitable maxims? Do we not expect that every man's judgment should stoop to ours? do we not wonder that any man should presume to dissent from us? must any man's voice be heard when we speak? Do we not suppose that our authority doth add huge weight to our words?* that it is unquestionably true because we say it? that it is presumption, it is temerity, it is rudeness hardly pardonable, to contest our dictates? This is a common practice, and that which is often prohibited and blamed in scripture: *Be not wise in thine own eyes*,[f] saith the Wise Man; and, *Be not wise in your own conceits*, saith the apostles; and, *I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*[g]

The great reasonableness of which precepts will appear by considering both the absurdity and the inconveniences of the practice which they forbid.

If we do reflect either upon the common nature of men, or upon our own constitution we cannot but find our conceits of our wisdom very absurd: for how can we take ourselves for wise, if we observe the great blindness of our mind, and feebleness of human reason, by many palpable arguments discovering itself? if we mark how painful the search, and how difficult the comprehension is of any truth; how hardly the most sagacious can descry any thing, how easily the most judicious mistake; how the most learned everlastingly dispute, and the wisest irreconcilably clash about matters seeming most familliar and facile; how often the most wary and steady do shift their opinions; how the wiser a man is, and the more experience he gaineth, the less confident he is in his own judgment, and the more sensible he groweth of his weakness; how dim the sight is of the most perspicacious, and how shallow the conceptions of the most profound; how narrow is the horizon of our knowledge, and how immensely the region of our ignorance is distended; how imperfectly and uncertainly we know those few things to which our knowledge reacheth;* how, answerably to such experience, we are told in sacred writ, that *every man is brutish in his knowledge*; that *the Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity*; that *vain man would be wise, though he be born like an ass's colt* (that is, he is naturally wild and stupid; that *wisdom is hid from the eyes of all men and is not found in the land of the living*; that *the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices uncertain*:[h] if we, I say, do consider such things, how can we but find it strange that any man should admire his own wisdom, seeing that he thereby doth exempt himself from the common adjunct of his nature, and forgetteth himself to be a man?

If, also, a man particularly reflecteth on himself, the same practice must needs appear very foolish; for that every man thence may discover in himself peculiar impediments of wisdom; every man in his complexion and in his condition may find things apt to pervert his judgment, and obstruct his acquisition of true knowledge. Is his temper sanguine? thence becometh he quick, rash, credulous, confident and peremptory, slippery and fickle: is it phlegmatic? thence is he slow and heavy; diffident, pertinacious, and stiff in his conceits: his mind is either soft and limber, so as easily to receive the impressions of falsehood speciously represented: or hard and tough, so that he cannot readily admit instruction in truth, or correction of error. His wealth distracteth, or his poverty disturbeth his thoughts; prosperity swelleth his mind up into vain presumptions and satisfactions, or adversity sinketh it down into unreasonable despondencies and dislikes of things; plenty breedeth sloth, want createth trouble, indisposing him to think well; ease doth rust his parts, and business weareth them out; inclination, interest, company, prejudice, do forcibly

* Ὅλος πέπνυται· τοὶ δὲ σκιαὶ ἀΐσσουσι.

[f] Prov. iii. 7. [g] Rom. xii. 16, 3.

* Quamcunque partem rerum humanarum divinarumque comprehenderis, ingenti copia quærendarum ac discendarum fatigaberis.—*Sen. Ep.* 88.

[h] Jer. x. 14; Psal. xciv. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 20; Job xi. 12; xxviii. 21, 12; Wisd. ix. 14.

sway his apprehensions; so that no man can get himself into, or keep himself steady in a perfect balance, requisite for exact judgment of things; no man therefore can obtain a degree of wisdom, whereof he may with any reason be conceited; the wisest men surely upon such experience have been little satisfied with their share; *Surely* (saith one) *I am more brutish than any man, and I have not the understanding of a man;* and, *so foolish* (saith another) *was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee:*[i] this conceitedness therefore is very absurd, and an argument of notable ignorance and folly; neither is there perhaps any more plain instance or demonstration of general folly reigning among men than this, that commonly we are so blind and stupid as not to discern and resent our own folly: *If any man* (saith St. Paul) *thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth not any thing yet as he ought to know;*[j] that is, if any man conceiteth himself to be considerably wise or intelligent, it is a plain sign that he is very ignorant, and understandeth little to any purpose.

So it is, if we consider ourselves singly; and it is more so in comparison to others; for what ground can a man have of arrogating to himself a peculiarity of wisdom or judgment? to deem himself extraordinary in that, to which there are no other than ordinary means of arriving? to fancy himself wiser than any other, whenas (secluding accidental differences, that cannot be accounted for) all men have the same parts and faculties of soul, the same means and opportunities of improvement, the same right and liberty of judging about things? Did not he, who *formeth the spirit of man within him*,[k] put into every man that heavenly mark, whereby we discern and judge of things? is not every man concerned in that saying of Elihu, *There is a spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding?*[l] do not the fountains of knowledge (natural delight, divine revelation, human instruction, continual experience) stand open to all; and are no less common to men than is the air they breathe, and the sun which equally shineth on them all? Is God, the donor of wisdom, partial in the distribution of it? doth not that overture reach indifferently to all, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally,—and it shall be given him?*[m] may not others be as inquisitive, as industrious, as sincere as we, in the search of truth? why not then as successful in finding it? Is there any private chink, through which light shineth only upon us, or truth may be espied? is there any cunning by-path, in which we alone, with more expedition and security than others in the common roads, can travel on toward knowledge? What patents have we to shew for a monopoly of reason? what right have we to engross any knowledge? who hath granted us a privilege of sure judgment, or an exemption from error? how can we in trial of things claim more than a single vote? or why should our word have more weight than any other? May not any man with as much reason prefer his judgment before ours, as we before his? and if we blame him for it, do we not thereby condemn ourselves for doing the like? If we do know but the same things, or frame the same judgments with others, how can we be conceited of that which is promiscuous? if we pretend to abstruse notions, or hold forth paradoxes, how can that be ground of boasting, seeing the cause standeth contested by authority no less than our own, and that it is vain to triumph over the opinions of others before we have conquered them? Why in such cases is it not reasonable to presume, that among the many dissenters from us, there are some who have as much sense as we, and who have weighed the matter with no less care, no less indifferency? In fine, may not any man with good cause propound to us that expostulation in Job: *Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?*[n]

Such conceitedness, therefore, is very absurd: and it is no less hurtful; for many great inconveniences, many sad

[i] Prov. iii. 2; Psal. lxxiii. 22.
[j] 1 Cor. viii. 2. [k] Zech. xii. 1.
[l] Ἐν βροτοῖς. LXX. Job xxxii. 8.
[m] James i. 5. [n] Job xv. 8, 9.

mischiefs, spring from it, such as gave the prophet cause to denounce *Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit:*[o] it hath many ways bad influence on our souls and on our lives; it is often our case, which was the case of Babylon, when the prophet said of it, *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge hath perverted thee; for thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and none else beside me.*[p]

It is a great bar to the getting wisdom, to the receiving instruction and right information about things; for he that taketh himself to be abundantly knowing, or incomparably wise, will not care to learn, will scorn to be taught;* he thence becometh more incapable of wisdom than a mere idiot; so did Solomon observe: *Seest thou* (said he) *a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him:*[q] of a fool, that is sensible of his ignorance, there may be hope that he may by instruction become wise; but he that taketh himself to want no instruction, or to be above learning, is in a desperate condition.†

It rendereth men in doubtful or difficult cases unwilling to seek, and unapt to take advice; he will not care for or admit any counsellor but himself; hence he undertaketh and easily is deceived, and incurreth disappointment, damage, disasters, in his affairs. As it is most incident to weak, inconsiderate, lazy persons, who have not a capacity, will not yield attention, or take pains to get right notions of things, so it doth smother all industry, consideration, and circumspection; for such persons think they need no labour in searching truth, no care in weighing arguments, no diligence in observing things; they can easily at first sight descry all, and penetrate to the bottom of things; they have at easy rates the pleasure of fancying themselves wise; why should they spend further pains to dispossess themselves of that pleasure, or to introduce another less satisfactory? Thus *is the sluggard* (as Solomon saith) *wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.*[r]

It rendereth us very rash and precipitant in judging; for the first shows of things, or the most slender arguments which offer themselves, being magnified, and aggravated from opinion concerning ourselves, do sway our judgment, and draw forth a sudden resolution from us; it must, we presently suppose, be very reasonable, because it seemeth reasonable to us.

Hence also we persist obstinate and incorrigible in error; for what reason can be efficacious to reclaim him whose opinion is the greater reason what argument can be ponderous enough to outweigh his authority? how can he (the man of wisdom, the perspicacious and profound person) yield that he hath erred? how can he part with the satisfaction of being always in the right, or endure the affront of being any time baffled?

It rendereth men peevish and morose, so as to bear nobody that dissenteth from them, nor to like any thing which doth not hit their fancy; to cross their opinion or humour, is to derogate from their wisdom; and being in their apprehension so injured, they find cause to be angry.

It rendereth them insolent, and imperious in conversation, so as to dictate, and impose their conceits upon others. He that is conceited of his own wisdom, will imagine that upon that advantage he hath a right to prescribe, others an obligation to submit; *eo ipso* he becometh a common master and judge; and they are culpable, who will not yield him a credulous ear, who will not stand to his decision.

Hence also do men become so carping and censorious; for if any man's words do not jump with their notions, if any man's actions be not conformable to their rules, they straightway rise up to condemn them of folly, of faultiness.

Yea, hence men become intolerably pragmatical; for they conceit themselves better to know another's concernments than he himself doth, and so will intrude their advice, will be angry if their advice be not followed.

* Hæc est hominis vera sapientia, Imperfectum esse se nosse.—*Hier. contra Pelag.* 1. 5.

† Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi putassent se pervenisse.—*Sen. de Tranq. An.* 1.

[o] Isa. v. 21. [p] Isa. xlvii. 10.

[q] Prov. xx. 12. [r] Prov. xxvi. 16.

To such inconveniences and iniquities this ill disposition exposeth us, and to many others; for it is indeed that in effect which the holy scripture representeth as the source of all impious and wicked courses; to which men betray themselves, while taking themselves to be wise, they do stiffly adhere to their own imaginations and devices, although contrary to the prescriptions of divine wisdom, to the dictates of common reason, to the admonitions of sober and good men: *We will* (say they in the prophet) *walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart:* and, *I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people: which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts:* and, *If he blesseth himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart:* and, *So I gave them unto their own heart's lust, and they walked in their own council.*[s] These are descriptions of bad men, implying self-conceit to be the root of their impiety.

2. Again, we are apt to conceit highly and vainly of our moral qualities and performances; taking ourselves for persons rarely good, perfect, and blameless; apprehending no defects in our souls, or miscarriages in our lives, although indeed we are as full of blemishes, we are as guilty of faults, as others: *There is* (saith the Wise Man) *a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness;*[t] to this generation we belong, if we admire our virtues, if we justify our lives, if (as it is said of the Pharisee) we *trust in ourselves that we are righteous.*[u]

This practice doth include great folly, and it produceth great mischiefs.

It is very foolish, and argueth the greatest ignorance that can be; for such is the imperfection, the impotency, the impurity of all men, even of the wisest and best men (discernible to them who search their hearts and try their ways, strictly comparing them to the rules of duty, God's laws, and the dictates of reason), that no man can have reason to be satisfied in himself or in his doings: every man looking into himself shall find his mind so pestered with vain and filthy thoughts; his will so perverse, so froward, so weak, so unsteady; his desires so fond and unwarrantable; his passions so disorderly and ungovernable; his affections so misplaced, or at least so cold and dull in regard to their right objects; his resolutions toward good so weak and slack; his intentions so corrupt, or mixed with oblique regards; he that observeth his actions, shall in the best of them (as to the principles whence they rise, as to the ends they drive at, as to the manner of their performance) find so many great defailances, that he will see cause rather to abhor than to admire himself.

Who, let me ask, doth love God with all his soul, so as to place in him his total content and delight, so as to do all things out of love to him, with a regard to his honour and service?[v] so as to be willing and glad to part with all things for his sake? who hath that constant and lively sense of God's benefits and mercies that he should have? who hath a perfect resignation of will to his pleasure, so as to be displeased with no event dispensed by his hand? who hath such a vigour of faith and confidence in him, as will support him in all wants, in all distresses, in all temptations, so as never to be disquieted or discouraged by them, so as to *cast on God* (as he is commanded) all the *cares* of his soul and *burdens* of his life? who constantly maintaineth a fervour of spirit, a steadiness of resolution, a clear and calm frame of soul, an abstractedness of mind from worldy desires and delights? who continually is fervent and undistracted in his devotion? who with an unwearied and incessant deligence doth watch over his thoughts? who doth entirely command his passions, and bridle his appetites? who doth exactly govern his tongue? who is perpetually circumspect over his actions? who loveth his neighbour as himself, seeking his good, and delighting therein as in his own; being sorry for his adversities, as if they had befallen himself? who feeleth that contrition of spirit, that shame, that remorse for his sins, or that detestation of them, which they deserve? who is duly sensible of his own unworthiness? Very few of us, surely, if we examine our con-

[s] Jer. xiii. 10; vi. 19; Isa. lxv. 2; liii. 6; Deut. xxix. 19; Psal. lxxxi. 12; Prov. i. 30, 31; Isa. lxvi. 4. [t] Prov. xxx. 12.
[u] Luke xviii. 9; xvi. 15; x. 29.
[v] Hier. in Lucif. cap. 6.

sciences, can answer, that we are they who perform these duties; and if not, where is any ground of self-conceit? how much cause rather is there of dejection, of displeasure, of despising and detesting ourselves!

There have indeed been sects of men (such as the Novatians and the Pelagians) who have pretended to perfection and purity;* but these men, one would think, did never read the scripture, did never consult experience, did never reflect on their minds, did never compare their practice with their duty; had no conscience at all, or a very blind and stupid one. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* was a question of Solomon, to the which he thought no man could answer affirmatively of himself; *If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse;*[w] was the asseveration of that person, whose virtue had undergone the severest trials: *In many things we offend all,*[x] was the confession of an apostle in the name of the wisest and best men.

Such men indeed (in contemplation of themselves and of their doings) have ever been ready to think meanly of themselves, to acknowledge and bewail their unworthiness, to disclaim all confidence in themselves, to avow their hope wholly to be reposed in the grace and mercy of God; (in his grace for ability to perform somewhat of their duty; in his mercy for pardon of their offences;) to confess themselves, with Jacob, *less than the least of God's mercies;* with David, that they *are worms and no men*; with Job, that they are *vile, and* unable *to answer God*, calling them to account, *in one case of a thousand*: that they *abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes;* that *after they have done all, they are unprofitable servants.*[y] And is he not very blind who doth see in himself those perfections which the greatest saints could not descry in themselves? is he not infinitely vain that fancieth himself more worthy than they did take themselves to be?

In fine, every man is in some kind and degree bad, sinful, vile; it is as natural for us to be so, as to be frail, to be sickly, to be mortal: there are some bad dispositions common to all, and which no man can put off without his flesh; there are some to which every man (from his temper, inclination, and constitution of body or soul), is peculiarly subject, the which by no care and pain can be quite extripated, but will afford during life perpetual matter of conflict and exercise to curb them; conceit, therefore, of our virtue is very foolish.

And it breedeth many great mischiefs.

Hence doth spring a great security, and carelessness of correcting our faults; for taking ourselves to be well, we see not any need of cure, thence seek none, nor admit any.[z]

Yea, hence riseth a contempt of any means conducible to our amendment, such as good advice and wholesome reproof: to advise such an one is to accuse him wrongfully; to reprove him, is to commit an outrage upon his presumed integrity of virtue. Hence also proceedeth a neglect of imploring the grace and mercy of God; for why should persons of so great strength crave succour? how should they beg pardon, who have so little sense of guilt? It is for a weak person to cry, Lord help me; it is for a publican to pray, *God be merciful unto me a sinner.*[a]

It breedeth arrogance and presumption even in devotions, or addresses to God, inducing such persons in unseemly manner to justify themselves before God, to claim singular interest in him, to mind him, and as it were to upbraid him with their worthy deeds, to thank him for their imaginary excellencies, like the conceited Pharisee: *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers—I fast twice a-week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*[b] They cannot demean themselves toward God as miserable sinners, who fancy themselves as admirable worthies, and gallants in virtue.

Also, a natural result thereof is a haughty contempt of others, venting itself in a supercilious and fastuous demeanour; so it was in the Pharisees, *who* (saith St. Luke) *trusted in themselves*

* The Donatists—remissionem peccatorum sic datis, quasi nullum habeatis ipsi peccatum, &c.—*Opt.* lib. 2.

[w] Prov. xx. 9; Eccles. vii. 20; Job ix. 20; xv. 14, xxv. 4; iv. 18; ix. 2; (Psal. cxliii 2.)

[x] James iii. 2.

[y] Gen. xxxii. 10; Psal. xxii. 6; Job xl. 4; xlii. 6; ix. 2; Luke xvii. 10.

[z] Matt. ix. 12; John ix. 41.

[a] Luke xviii. 13.

[b] Luke xviii. 11.

that they were righteous, and despised others.[c] Such persons, observing or suspecting defects and misbehaviours in others, but discerning none in themselves, do in their opinion advance themselves above their brethren, and accordingly are prone to behave themselves toward them: such men as they, are the especially good men, the godly, the saints, the flower of mankind, the choice ones, the darlings of God, and favourites of Heaven, the special objects of divine love and care: others are impure and profane, rejectaneous and reprobate people, to whom God beareth no good-will or regard. Hence proceedeth a contemptuous disregard or estrangedness toward other men; like that of those separatists in the prophet, who, notwithstanding they were *a people provoking God to anger continually to his face*,[d] were yet, in conceit of their own special purity, ready to say, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou;* whereas those who, soberly reflecting on their nature, their hearts, their ways, do frame a right judgment of themselves, can hardly esteem any man worse than themselves; they perceive themselves so frail, so defectuous, so culpable, as to find great reason for their compliance with those apostolical precepts: *In lowliness of mind, let each man esteem others better than himself: In honour perfer one another.*[e]

This likewise disposeth men to expect more than ordinary regard from others; and they are much displeased, if they find it not in degree answerable to their conceit of themselves; taking them for silly, envious, or injurious persons, who forbear to yield it: such excellent persons must in all things be humoured and cockered, otherwise you greatly wrong them.

Hence also such men easily become discontented and impatient; for if they be crossed in any thing, if any misfortune toucheth them, they take it very ill; supposing they deserve it not, but are worthy of better usage and fortune.

In fine, as this causeth a man to behave himself untowardly in respect to all others (toward God and toward his neighbour), so thence he most unbecomingly carrieth himself toward himself; he is no faithful friend, no good companion to himself, but a fond minion, a vile flatterer, or a profane idolater of himself; for (like Narcissus) being transported with conceit of his own incomparable beauty or excellency, he maketh love to and courteth himself; finding delight in such conceit, he by all means cherisheth it, glozing and *flattering himself* (as the Psalm hath it) *in his own eyes*;[f] representing his qualities to his imagination in false shapes, he devoutly adoreth those idols of his brain. Further,

3. Self-conceit is also frequently grounded upon other inferior advantages: upon gifts of nature (as strength, activity, beauty;) upon gifts of fortune (so called), as birth, wealth, dignity, power, fame, success: upon these things men ordinarily much value themselves, and are strangely puffed up with vain opinion, taking themselves from them to be great and happy persons; but seeing (as we touched before) these things are in themselves little valuable (as serving no great purpose, nor furthering our true happiness;) seeing they are not commendable (as not depending on our free choice, but proceeding from nature or chance;) seeing they are not durable or certain, but easily may be severed from us; the vanity of self-conceit founded on them is very notorious, and I shall not insist more to declare it; I shall only recommend the prophet's advice concerning such things: *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth*:[g] that is, nothing within us or about us should elevate our minds, excepting the assurance that God doth govern the world, being ready to protect and succour us, to dispense mercy and justice to us; so that, how weak and helpless soever in ourselves, yet confiding in him, we shall never be overwhelmed by any wrong or misfortune.

So much concerning self-conceit; the other parts of vicious self-love may be reserved to another occasion.

[c] Luke xviii. 9. [d] Isa. lxv. 5.
[e] Phil. ii. 3; Rom. xii. 10. [f] Psal. xxxvi. 2. [g] Jer. ix. 23, 24.

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